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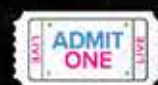
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“Never Invent Anything but Happiness”
A Chat with Victoria’s The Happy Failure

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and where is everyone from?

Ry: Originally from Comox and moved to Victoria in 2009.

Ashley A: I grew up on a farm in Northern Alberta, eventually making my way to Calgary for a while before landing in Victoria in 2016.

Ashley B: From a small town in Quebec and I moved to Victoria in 2014.

Sarah: Born and raised in Victoria, BC.

AU: How/When did the band come together?

THF: The band started with Ry and Ashley B jamming in 2018 and they formed The Happy Failure. Once the original guitar player left and it came down to Ry and Ashley B, they decided to keep things going and invited Ashley A over for a jam. From the moment the trio first jammed it was clear something special was unfolding. Ashley A officially joined the band in summer 2019 and shows started happening. Ashley B. wanted to be able to connect with the audience more during her vocal performances, so she put down the bass in 2020. Sarah then joined the band in 2020 and the final missing puzzle piece was found.

AU: What kind of music will people see/hear when they come to one of your shows?

THF: If you come to one of our shows you will see a diverse rock band that draws from lots of different influences. To the core we are rock and roll and deliver a high energy performance all

about having fun. We are conscience of our music and lyrics and write from the heart.

AU: Unusual band name- what’s the story here?

THF: It was inspired by a 170-year-old short story by Herman Melville. The final message of the story was to “never invent anything but happiness.”

AU: What does everyone play and how did you come into music?

Ry: Originally a guitarist and a student of drums and bass (I have a curiosity of all things musical including synthesizers and electronic music production). I started playing guitar at the age of 16 completely self-taught. Started a band one month after picking up a guitar for the first time and never looked back.

Ashley A: Guitar, drums, vocals, and mixing are my main instruments, but I dabble on anything I can make a beat with or that has strings. My dad bought me my first guitar when I was 12 and I am self-taught by ear. At 13 I started playing drums and at 16 I started DJing professionally. Along the way I made a point of learning any musical instrument that crossed my path. Early on songwriting became a passion, and I started singing putting words to my music. I’ve played in multiple different bands and jam groups eventually finding my home with The Happy Failure.

Ashley B: I started by playing guitar and moved to singing during my later teens when I started writing songs. I also play bass. My mom put me into piano lessons when I was 3 even though I initially didn’t enjoy it. I felt like I had to perform, and I just wanted to be myself. I always loved music and I was inspired by my stepmom who played in an all women band. The next Christmas I got a guitar as a present.

When I was in my first year of high school, I took music class for the first time and learned a lot through that. I also joined in with my stepmom’s band at times and started writing my own original music at age 12.

Sarah: I started playing bass when I was 12 years old in middle school and quickly switched over to playing guitar and singing while writing my own music. I initially was rebellious and resisted

any music theory I felt was forced on me. I started taking guitar lessons when I was 14 with an amazing artist who let me focus on learning to play by ear. I quickly started playing every day alone in my bedroom with a looper under a black light. Learning music production soon followed, and my life has been centered around music ever since.

AU: Sound influences?

Ry: Nirvana, Dead Kennedys and snowboard/skateboard punk. The friends I have always played with are my biggest influence. Also Sublime.

Ashley A: My musical influences are so diverse there are way too many to list but a few that come to mind are: Tool, Fleetwood Mac, Mazzy Star, Alt-J, The Cranberries and Jack White.

Ashley B: Lyrically Dallas Green from City and Colour, The Pack A.D., Peach Pit and so many more.

Sarah: Slightly Stoopid, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix and The Glass Animals.

AU: What local bands are you interested in right now? Who has your ear?

THF: Capital Collective, Lawn Social, Hyaenas, Aidan Knight, Queens Park, Little Destroyer, Astrocolor

AU: Who are some bands you’ve been billed with?

THF: Blonde Diamond, Featurette, RebeLstoke, Hyaenas

AU: Fave place to play? Or type of place you like to play?

Ry: Outdoors at house parties

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY

Ashley A: Victoria Events Center

Ashley B: Lucky Bar

Sarah: Duncan Showroom

*Unfortunately, the Rubber Boot Club has closed, but we dearly loved that venue.

AU: What’s the road ahead for The Happy Failure?

THF: Our first album is completed and will be released in the fall. We are aiming for a Canadian tour next summer and we have an upcoming music video that will be released later this summer.

AU: When something goes off the rails do you just say Ashley did it and see what happens?

THF: Yes, because there is a 50% chance that we are right by blaming an Ashley but it was probably 90%

Ry! (there is a 90% chance that Ry loaded all the gear and said Thank you everyone).

AU: Anything to add?

THF: This band is all about comradery, having fun and getting to make the music we love together. We are all about diversity and the joy of performing music. The Happy Failure is a message to embrace happiness and understand that failure is an inevitable part of growth.

Chat/ Images: John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography

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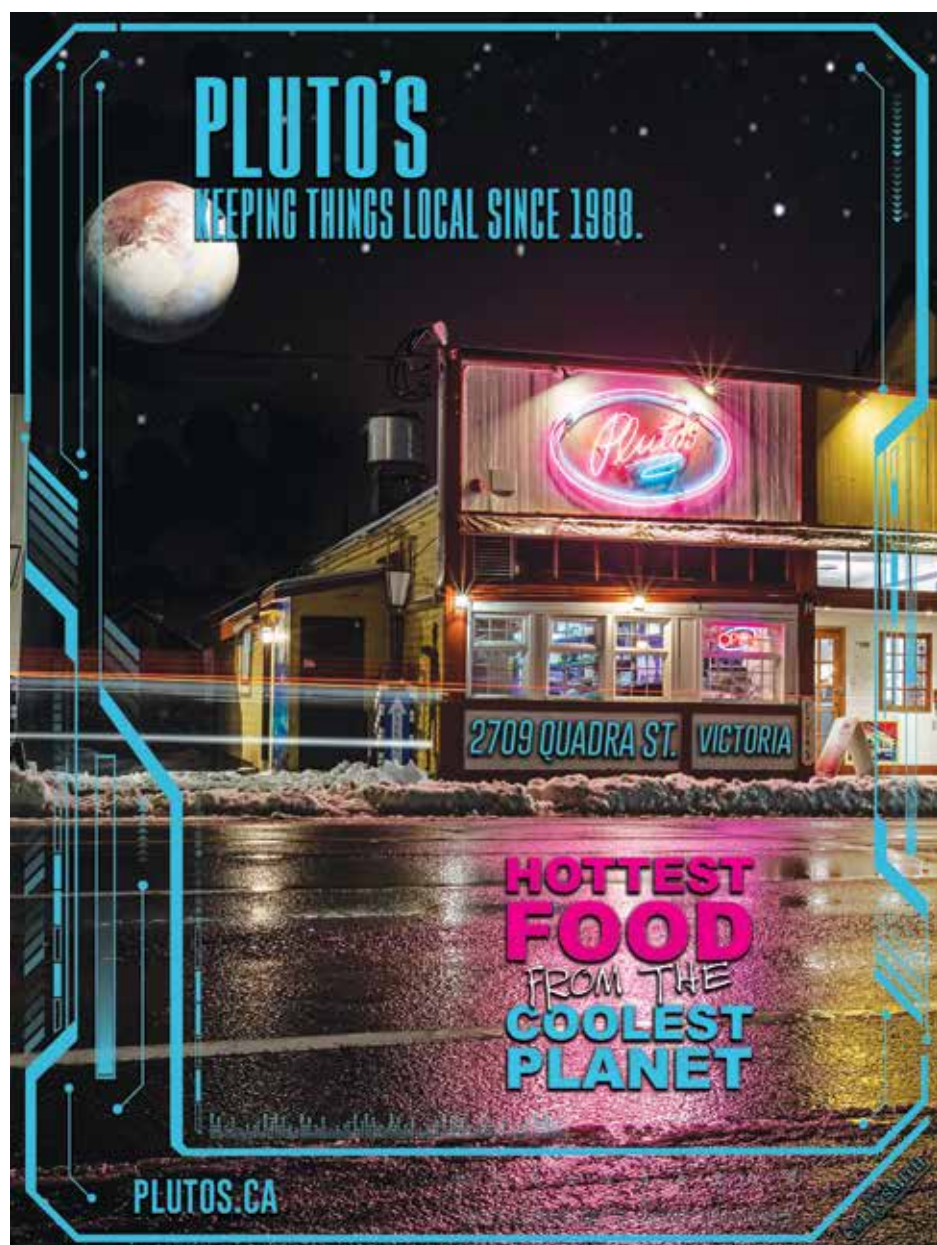
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Chi Pig Scholarship Fundraiser

Former host of *Mind Compression* on CJSR FM88.5, (Metal) John Kyle is partnering with Cameron Noyes to establish the Mr. Chi Pig (Ken. S Chinn) Community Memorial scholarship to encourage Victoria students going into post secondary education in art and singing, to explore his legacy as a former Victoria School of The Arts Alumn.

It is his hope that, through applying for a scholarship in his name, a new generation of artists and singers will discover the enormity of his influence on pop culture, alternative music, illustration, skateboarding, and a world wide family of like-minded individuals.

Chi Pig was the singer for the legendary Canadian punk band SNFU, The Wongs, and Slaveco. In addition to a 40 plus year career as a musician

Chi Pig was also a prolific artist and writer as well as a radio host (Redman Radio Victoria School) and guest host on many radio and television shows including *Much Music*, *Off The Record* and *Mind Compression* on CJSR FM 88.5

After news of his death in 2020, tributes and condolences flooded social media from some of the biggest stars in alternative music, now mainstream as a result of the doors he opened and the trail he blazed.

Chi Pig was also a hero to the LGBTQ+ community being both openly gay and Asian in a time when inclusion and safe spaces were still just an ideal. Throughout most of his life and career Ken Chinn suffered from mental illness and consequently addition. Regardless of how he died Chi Pig lived with passion and exuberance sporting the most eclectic fashion on and off stage, he lived for the spotlight and excelled at thrilling all who saw him perform; part singer, part acrobat, he was like a whirling dervish always reaching for the stars and jumping higher than any other stage performer. In his golden years as illness took his energy he would sit in his local pub and paint hundreds of works of art, knowing that the sun was setting on his career

and that time was indeed the enemy. In his final recording, "Cement Mixer (To All My Beautiful Friends)" Chi Pig thanks all of us who admired, loved and supported him throughout his career with these final words, "Thanks, I'm sure gonna miss you guys..."

Author Chris Walter wrote a poignant biography of the band SNFU (*What No one Else Wanted To Say*) www.punkbooks.com, and Prairie Coast films gave us the wonderful film *Open Your Mouth and*



(Chi's birthday). This first annual fundraiser will be held at the iconic Starlite Room in Edmonton, AB.

The inaugural event will feature a slide show of Chi Pig's art circa 2016-2020 prior to the screening of *Praire Coast Films Open Your Mouth and Say Chi Pig*. Following the film will be music from The Cut Offs, Dad Religion, and The Devils Voice, featuring Jesse Zaraska of Compromise and Misery.

Signals. There may be more bands and guests added if time allows but these bands all promise to hit hardcore levels of intensity paying tribute to the Mighty SNFU and honouring our dear friend Chi Pig in the process. In addition to the phenomenal music, the event will also feature works of art submitted by friends of Chi Pig for a silent auction including a hand painted skate board from Donna Derry, a hand drawn event poster by renowned illustrator and art teacher Spyder Yardley Jones, and event poster art by Victoria School alum Bob Prodor (his Nirvana at the Bronx gig poster is legendary and worth thousands of dollars to some collectors) Bob will also be performing with his band The Cut Offs. There will be a very limited edition art shirt of Chi Pig

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Jim "The Tank" Dorsey - Part 2 "Larger Than Life and Twice as Ugly!"

Interview by Ryan "Master Blaster" Dyer and Ira "Feral Kid" Hunter

Absolute Underground: When did you first don the Lord Humungus uniform?

TANK: After attending the very first Wasteland Weekend in 2010. I went out to this, at the time, fairly unknown event as an MFP officer from the first *Mad Max* film. So, one of my camp mates said I should come back the following year as The Lord Humungus. He claimed that I was the only guy there big enough to pull off the character. I dismissed this though as I had a power lifter's build, pale skin and was a bit on the hairy side, so

as well?

TANK: I lost count how many other cosplays I've done but I think that number hit 30 something at one point. I've done Road Pig, Ivan Drago, Conan the Destroyer, Judge Dredd, Marv from *Sin City*, Non from *Superman II*, the Uber Immortal from *300*, the Germanic Mechanic from *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, and also Beef from *Phantom of the Paradise*.

AU: What songs do you play when you DJ as Humungus?

TANK: I actually DJ as a variety of characters depending on the event, but DJ Humungus is the driving force behind it all. What started out as almost a joke at Wasteland Weekend 2014 blossomed into the only real moneymaking avenue I've found in cosplay. DJ Humungus is known for spinning undeniably hard and unforgivably heavy industrial techno metal. Anything chock full of heavy, chuggy guitars but has a solid dance beat. I have also DJ'd as Ivan Drago - "I must break you", Roy Batty - "More DJ than Human" and Marv - "A DJ to Kill For."

we didn't really discuss it any further. Shortly after returning home however, he forwarded me a link to an eBay listing for a Cooper HM-6 hockey mask (the same style mask that Lord Humungus wears) and stated that this must be fate.

AU: Aside from Lord Humungus, do you do a few other cosplays

AU: What is the rarest *Mad Max* item you own?

TANK: One of the times I went down to Australia I had a metal detector so we could find buried treasure at places like where the tanker rolls over at the end of *The Road Warrior* and where the Interceptor rolls over and is blown up. We found lots of pieces of the Interceptor and pieces of the Humungus Machine.

AU: Tell us about Wasteland Weekend - what goes on during those five days in the California desert?

TANK: Wasteland Weekend is the most fun you will ever have without breaking the law! It's like going to a Renaissance Faire except it's set in a bleak apocalyptic future. Oh, and costumes are mandatory, at least to be able to walk through the gates and set foot in Wasteland City they are. This way, once you cross over that line, everything you see, 360 degrees, is all post-apocalyptic.

You can suspend all disbelief. As you walk through the gates you get a slight uneasy feeling as the guards are all watching you closely, training their flame thrower and massive crossbow from the towers at all attendees, ready to weed out the troublemakers. Once inside you will see all sorts of tribes and vendors set up in every which direction, all welcoming you into their little corner of Wasteland City. You can schedule an appointment to get your head shaved into a mohawk and have some war paint applied. One of the biggest events each year is the bounty hunting hosted by the Rust Devils. Work your way up in the ranks and your bounties will get harder and harder until you might actually be handed a bounty on the Lord Humungus himself. There are several other key points of interest like the night club at the Wasted Saints, the Last Chance Casino, and the Atomic Cafe. A few things you won't be able to miss is the Thunderdome which always draws a big crowd, The Cage with fully armed and armored



combatants busting each other up gladiatorial style, and The Pit where the DJs spin all through the night.

AU: Could it be assumed that you are in character for those five days?

TANK: I am in character most of that time, yes. I usually kick off the whole event the first night on the main stage with a big DJ Humungus blow-out. I like to really get the crowd riled up. I started

a tradition in the Wasteland a few years ago where we roast a fellow tribal leader for the entertainment of the masses. We also run a massive car cruise each year at Wasteland and my tribe, the Dogs of War, are always there is full force with all our screen accurate vehicles and costumes leading the way.

AU: What else would you like people to know about you?

TANK: Well, I am very happily married to my best friend and beautiful wife, Faye. She is a professional photojournalist and documentary filmmaker. We met when she interviewed me for a news spot for an upcoming convention I was appearing at with my *Mad Max* collection. She decided she wanted to make a documentary about me and all my cosplay exploits, with a strong focus on Lord Humungus. You can find out more at facebook.com/HumungusDoc



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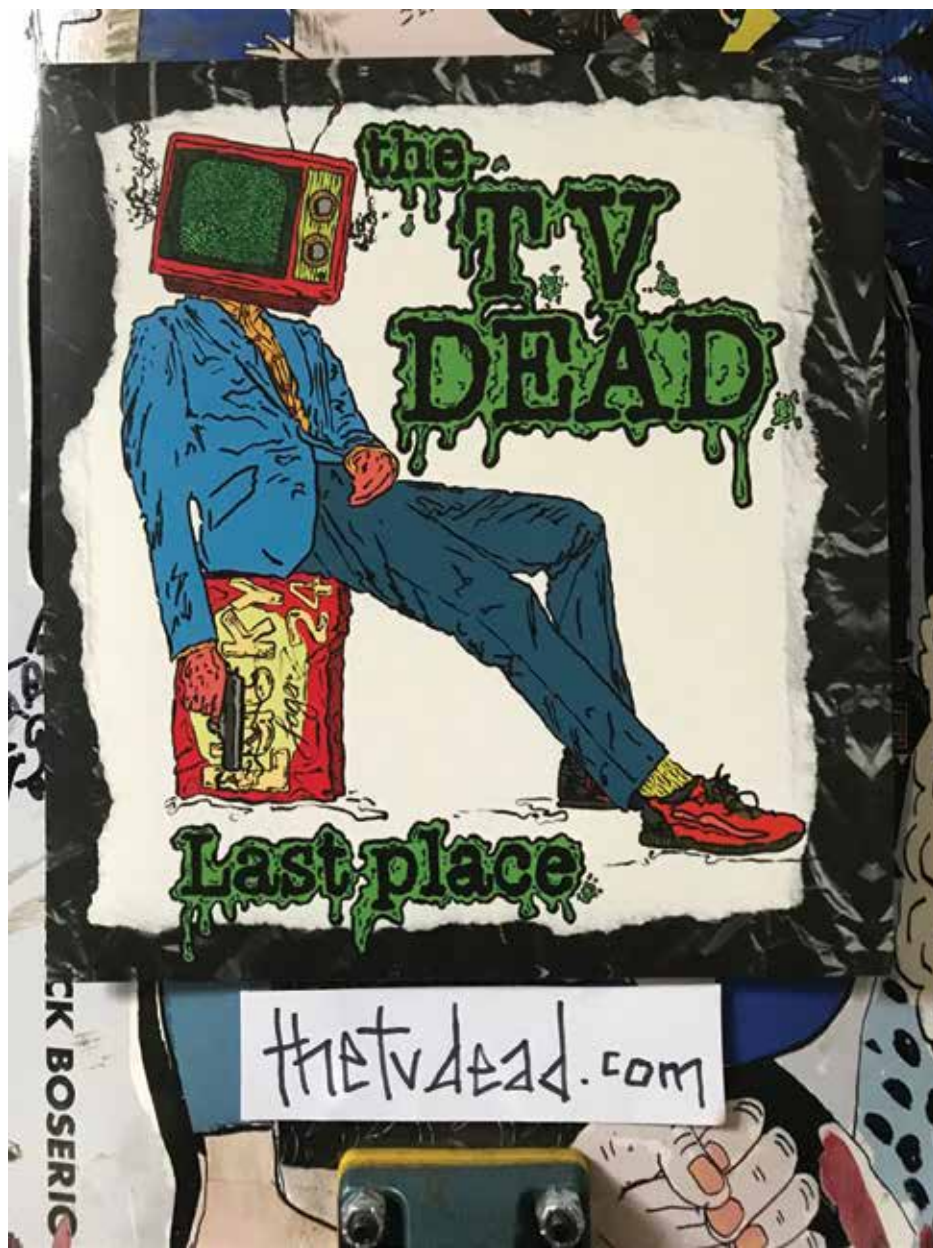
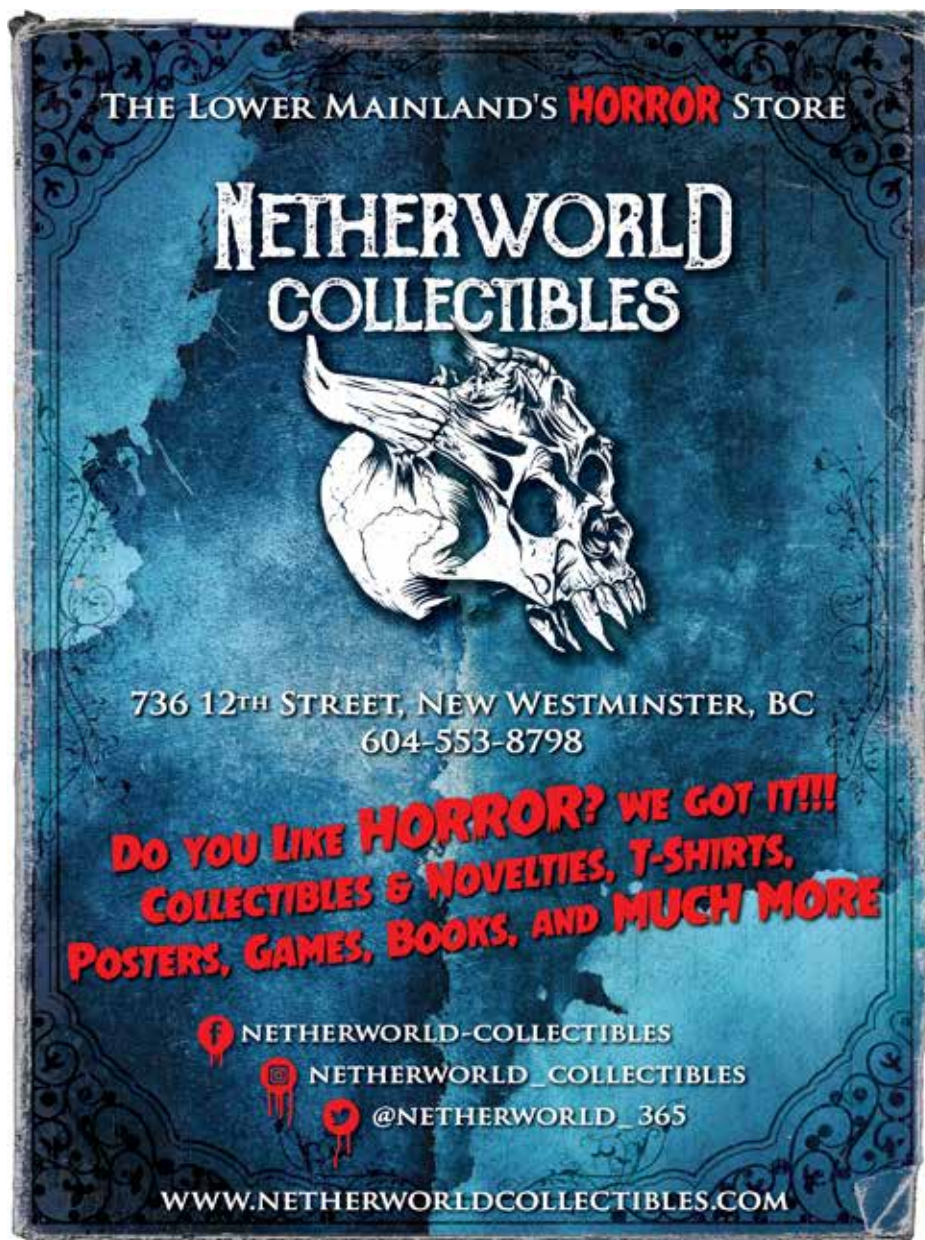
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THE INVISIBLE ORANGE

Some reflections from The Invisible Orange on the independent local live music "industry"

By Abelardo Mayoral-Fierros

The last few days I had the great opportunity to hang out and discuss with a couple of independent bands in the BC area about their touring experience and what they see as their future needs. I was already amazed at the amount of talent we have in our local scenes, and now I can also admire the amount of hard work and dedication as well that they all put not just in the music, but in the band as a whole.

I started thinking at first how local bands organize their events. Independent DIY bands don't always set up sound and mix during their live sets. Band members don't set up a bar and sell beer. Band members wouldn't be doing door (at least during their set!). We all rely on many people have to do their part to put the whole thing together.

Sometimes the bands take it to themselves to organize, produce and promote their own shows, and sometimes they would rely on an (independent) promoter.

Now this gets us to touring. Most times bands would organize their dates, and directly contact either bars or promoters to put up their shows. Bands rarely will ask an (independent) agent to help with that burden. But the

more I talk to bands that have gone through the experience of booking a tour, no matter how small or how big, they realize it is one of the parts of this "Independent Live Music Industry".

What is it that I call the Independent Live Music Industry?

I could be arguably defined as the system, group or community composed by bands, techs, promoters, venue owners, venue staff, and fans who make the whole live music experience possible. Bands themselves are solely responsible for creating the music we enjoy, yes, but for people (fans) to enjoy it live, we all rely on each other.

There is also in general an Independent Music Industry, which would include the use of online tools to make the music available, printing, stamping and duplication companies to create the physical formats, if the bands print themselves. And sometimes they can rely on (independent) record labels or (independent) publicists.

Let's see why I put "(independent)" in brackets. I define independent when it is a company or sole person running as a company which relies on their own

resources to conduct their business. When the resources come from an external source, then it may not be independent as it will have to respond to the interests and objectives of the larger organization before the interest of the art that is being showcased. And these organizations can be either private (large corporation or holding) or public, but the

independent ones could almost always be private.

My conclusion is that if we want to strengthen the "local scenes" we need to partner more with each other. With other bands, with fans, with techs or industry workers. The more we work together, with each one individually doing their part, is how we can achieve a thriving scene.

Finally, I am genuinely curious as to what you may think. If you want to reply to this opinion piece please email me at mayo@theinvisibleorange.com and let me know what you think. Where would you disagree, or perhaps things we can elaborate on these unstructured thoughts. I appreciate you sharing your thoughts in advance.

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Razor

Cycle of Contempt

Interview with guitarist Dave Carlo
by Ira “Hot Metal” Hunter, Jason “Fast and Loud” Flower, and Sheldon “Below the Belt” Byer
Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Dave Carlo: You are talking to Dave Carlo. I’m considered a high intensity maniac on the guitar. The guy who’s known more for punishing the shit out of it than finesse. Also a founding member of the band Razor.

AU: What is the origin story of Razor?

DC: We go back to 1983 and formed in Guelph, Ontario. I started out as a bass player in 1978 when I was 14, and I was in a band there. I left that band because I wanted to develop my own sound. So I put a band together that was called Poison. Not the guys from LA, I had dibs on the name first, but we never recorded with it. I was still playing bass and writing all the music. Mike Campagnolo and I had planned to do Razor because Poison broke. We started putting Razor together in the summer of 1983 with a guy named Paul Chapman who was going to be the second guitarist. Paul got hit by a car and was killed in September of 1983 and that changed the plan a little bit. We started doing auditions and we ended up with the lineup that recorded *Armed & Dangerous*.

AU: What was the very first band that you were in?

DC: Well, the name of the band was Illumination, a three piece band. I was the bass player & interestingly enough, the first drummer of Razor Mike “M-Bro” Embro was the drummer. The guitar player was my older brother Mike. We had originals, but it was mostly cover stuff.

AU: Were there any other bands around at that time that didn’t get well known but were noteworthy?

DC: The noteworthy bands that I actually know would be the Toronto underground metal bands that were around just as Razor was coming out.

Sacrifice and Slaughter. Of course Anvil was very popular at the time.

AU: High Roller Records recently released your early demo “Escape The Fire.” Tell us about that.

DC: It’s actually not a demo. It was supposed to be the first full length album by Razor. Our first full length album ended up being called *Executioner’s Song* and we had to redo the songs for that record. The songs that you hear on the “Escape The Fire” gets called a demo because it never got put onto vinyl, but it was a professional quality recording. It wasn’t a demo quality in terms of the budget and it was recorded in a professional studio. The reason it ended up not coming out was because Attic Records wanted some of the *Armed & Dangerous* songs redone for *Executioner’s Song*. They knew that it sold really well as an independent. I would have preferred the first album to be *Escape The Fire*. That’s what we wanted it to be. Also *Escape The Fire* will come out eventually on our American label, Relapse Records as well.

AU: Who was the artist who did the art for Executioner’s Song and Evil Invaders? Was it the same artist?

DC: No, there’s two different guys. *Executioner’s Song* was by a guy named Garnet Giesbrecht. The guy who did *Evil Invaders* I’m not sure. We were trying to get the guy who did the Rush album cover for *Permanent Waves*. Maybe he asked for too much money because the record company never went for it.

AU: Looking at the cover for Malicious Intent, it reminds me of the cover from Anvil’s Metal On Metal LP.

DC: Maybe I did that subconsciously. I came up with that cover concept one day, I was thinking about a song on the album called “Grindstone” and I just thought we could be sharpening a straight razor on it. Maybe with some sparks flying. They had the extra idea of putting some girl with really nice hands on there to get all the guys with testosterone overload.

AU: How would you describe Razor’s sound?

DC: I’d say if you like Slayer, you will like Razor. That’d be the quickest answer if you’re looking for a big band to compare us to.

AU: Yes, Razor’s been described as the Canadian Slayer.

DC: I would say that’s pretty accurate but the major way we’re different is we only have one guitarist not two. We also have a biker kind of image and maybe a bit of a vigilante image. Some people have said a “serial killer image”, I think that’s a bit out there. As opposed to Slayer who had that satanic thing. The upside down crosses, satanic, black metal kind of thing. We weren’t really doing that, we were doing more of a biker thing.

AU: The 1988 album, Violent Restitution, some feel is sort of your peak and pinnacle. What made that album so special, in your opinion?

DC: This is going to seem like an arrogant thing to say, but it is 100% true. *Violent Restitution* is the one out of all the Razor albums we ever did, that I completely micromanaged the entire project. I would not accept any input that I didn’t agree with. I made sure I used an iron fist to get it done the way I wanted it done. The reason I did that

was that it was experimental in nature. We were not just going to fade away, we needed to come back with a strong record. I wasn’t going to let anybody tell me how that was going to play out. I figured if I’m going to go down, I’m going to go down on my own terms. That’s what made *Violent Restitution* what it is. I will also say that on *Cycle of Contempt* that’s coming out very soon, I have done the same thing.



AU: What more can you tell us about the upcoming Razor album Cycle of Contempt coming out on Relapse Records?

DC: August 9th they release the first single as a lyric video - “Flames Of Hatred.” At that point, the album is available for pre-order. September 15, the second single is going to be released. September 23rd is the full release of the album. I love every song on this album. It’s our first album in 25 years. I would say at this stage of my life my standards are higher than they used to be. I would not put anything on the record that I didn’t feel was worthy of release. I’ve written the kind of songs people who love an album like *Violent Restitution* are going to love.

AU: Who is the biggest asshole in the Canadian Big Four Of Thrash? Who’s the nicest?

DC: The biggest asshole in the Canadian Big Four Of Thrash? Well, first of all, I think we have to define who the Canadian Big Four are, because I always hear different things. I usually hear Razor in there. I usually hear Sacrifice. Sometimes people put Annihilator in, sometimes they put Voivod in, sometimes they put Exciter. There’s no assholes. Not in the Canadian Big Four. Have I met assholes? Absolutely. Of course, I wouldn’t write the kind of songs I’ve written if I didn’t meet assholes. But I wouldn’t find them there. Those are all my friends. As far as the nicest guy - oh, man, that’s a tough one too. But I mean, my best friends in the music community in Canada are the band Sacrifice. Those are my best friends. We came up around the same time, we toured together, we know each other well, we’re very supportive of each other. The relationship has always been that way. It’s never been adversarial. That’s how I would define an asshole. An asshole would be a musician who when they’re playing with other bands, sees those other bands as competition or as a threat.

AU: We have these sections in the magazine. They’re called “Toronto Trash” or “Wretched Winnipeg”. What would be the Guelph one?

DC: Guelph Garbage!

AU: What is up with the cover for Razor’s

Decibels album cover?

DC: What is up with it? Like, why is that cover so bad? I’m not making excuses at all. Although it may seem like I’m not trying to disassociate myself with anything Razor did that was less than perfect. I’ll tell you right now, two album covers that I think are not great are *Shotgun Justice* and *Open Hostility*. The original covers for those releases really stink. The redone versions on Relapse are much better, the original versions were pretty cheesy. *Decibels* was thrown together by a friend of our singer. When we recorded *Decibels* in 1997, I was really not interested in it at all. I had retired Razor in 1992, for good. I had never planned to go back, thrash metal seemed to be not important to people anymore. I felt like I needed to move on with my life to do something else to make a better living. I had written the songs in 1992, it was going to be the follow up to *Open Hostility*, which was our last album in ’91, before I retired the band, but I had the songs done. So Bob Reed over the next five years, just put lyrics to the songs and he said, “Dave, why don’t we record them professionally?” I wasn’t really that interested. But he said, “I’ll do everything for you. I’ll get the record company lined up for the release, I got the lyrics for the songs, I’ll set up the studio, I’ll do the whole thing, all you have to do is show up and do your guitar parts”. So I thought, Okay, I’ll do that. I didn’t even worry about that record that much other than I wanted it to be a decent sounding record, because it was still going to be a Razor record. I wasn’t thinking about decisions like artwork or things like that. Maybe he threw it together quickly. It’s a guy holding his eardrums with a building being blown up behind him. Roland is the guy’s name and he’s a mean SOB too.

So if anybody tells Roland to his face the cover sucks, I would recommend that you not do that.

AU: What brought Razor back?

DC: It was the internet that brought Razor back. The whole world became a much smaller place once the internet evolved. Once people were able to download music in the early 2000s, a lot of people discovered us. That’s really what got us going again, we started getting offers to play. I used to just lock them up. I did that for quite a few years, we’d do an occasional show just for fun. Then all of a sudden, the offers became more and better. It got to the point where I was like we can’t ignore this, there’s demand for it, maybe it’s worth doing this again. So we started getting more serious about it around 2008/2009. It was only five years ago that I decided we would finally put out an album. If this one is well received, I’ll make another one.

AU: You’ve had some problems with your eyesight?

DC: I’m currently blind. I have Stargardt’s dystrophy, it’s a slow, gradual loss of your central vision that started in one eye in 1997. By 2002, it was in both eyes and I reached the point where I lost my entire central vision. I can’t see the guitar when I am on stage, I can’t see my hands on the fretboard. I had to learn how to adapt. I have glow in the dark tape on my frets when I go on stage and I have ultraviolet light on the frets, through my peripheral vision, I can see the frets. Yeah, it’s presented a lot of challenges. I’m also a cancer survivor. My wife has stage four cancer right now. And she’s fighting for her life. I had to cancel all of our shows in Europe this summer to take care of my wife. I’m raising money to try and help pay for the treatments. There’s a GoFundMe page, if anybody wants to support me there. Type Rose Carlo GoFundMe, that’s my wife. I am really appreciative of anyone supporting me there.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of thrash metal?

DC: Please support Razor’s kick off for *Cycle Of Contempt*. It took us 25 years to get off our asses to make another album, I promise you, if you like thrash metal it’s money well worth investing. Buy it and support the metal scene and support Canadian metal. If it sells then it gives us incentive to keep doing it. Also come to see us when we’re in your area. We are going to get back out there and start performing regularly very soon.

AU: How do people find you online?

DC: Follow me on social media by typing in my name DaveCarloRazor - I usually put some interesting stuff up there.

razorband.com





Fortress Tattoos

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

CDM: My name is Cory D McCaughley and I'm most well known for my tomfoolery but I fill in the cracks as a professional tattoo artist.

AU: How long have you been a tattoo artist? What got you started?

CDM: I started working in tattoo shops in 2008 ish 2009. I was just a punk kid with nowhere to be. I honestly really just liked getting tattooed. I hung out at the shop (Skins & Sins) a bunch, I got tattooed when I could and one thing led to another and I was offer a position running the broom. I remember it being the cool place to be, I wanted to be there more then anything. I find as time passes and the longer I tattoo the more I find the things that made me fall in love with tattooing are the same things that keep me in love with it. The people I meet and the friends I make along the way.



AU: Tell us about your new tattoo shop, Fortress Tattoos. Where is it located?

CDM: Fortress is located in Langford, British Columbia on Vancouver Island. We are very excited and have been working hard to bring this shop into the world. We are a custom shop with a private atmosphere. But we are about a lot more then just tattooing, this is a studio that specializes in high end custom art and we can put it on anything from people to cars and everything in between.

AU: What makes your shop unique? How would you describe your shop's style?

CDM: Our shop is unique to us because it is us. This place will be a true window into our minds to show case tattooing as we see it. We are also heavily inspired by a lot of different types of art outside of tattooing and we really wanting to build a place that we could showcase all the different types of art we do,

and are into.

AU: What other services other than tattooing do you offer?

CDM: We make custom art, draw, paint, you name it we do it. But we are mainly known for our tattooing, brush painting, custom airbrushing pin striping, lettering and sign painting.

AU: What style of tattooing are you best known for?

CDM: I love tattooing and I pride myself on being versatile. I would definitely say I do predominantly black and grey but if I can do it my way, I will tattoo in any style.

AU: What was the first tattoo you ever got and what was the first tattoo you ever did on someone?

CDM: The first tattoo I ever got was a purple scorpion and my mom got a matching one just before I turned 16 haha. And the first tattoo I ever did on someone was a tribal whale on my dad (sorry dad) haha.

AU: Who else works at Fortress Tattoo with you and what is their area of expertise?

CDM: My beautiful wife Cori is my partner in this business and she tattoos with me. She is extremely talented and a gifted artist. She can do

anything.

AU: What's the craziest tattoo you have ever done?

CDM: I one time tattooed an eagle on dude's head while he laid on his motorcycle lift in the middle of a chopper shop haha

AU: Is there a certain tattoo you are still dying to do on someone?

CDM: I still love the classics snakes, skulls, roses. I also love black and grey realism, dog portraits flower and things like that. But I'm always down to challenge myself and work outside the box.

AU: Do tattoos have to have a deep meaning or can they simply be about wicked art?

CDM: Everything has meaning in some way. I mostly get tattooed by friends or people I like. So honestly a lot of the stuff that's on me is more representative of the people who did them, more then it is of myself. That being said though some of these tattoos definitely do have a more literal meaning but some are just for the sake of a good time.

AU: What are you most proud of in regards to your shop?

CDM: I have got the

INK SLINGERS

chance to work with some really great people

and they have had a profound impact on me. I learned so much and I'm so grateful for them. My successes here are their successes as teachers, mentors and as my friends. I'm proud to open the doors everyday, mop the floors and tattoo to the best of my ability. To have the respect of the people I respect most.

AU: What kinds of music or bands do you play at the shop when working?

CDM: Punk rock or gangster rap.

AU: Any final thoughts to share with our readers?

CDM: I just wanna say thank you for your time and I definitely encourage people to keep an eye out for us. Check us out on Instagram, we have big things in the works and I promise it's going to be rad! Thanks again!

AU: How do people find and connect with Fortress Tattoo online?

CDM: Facebook Fortress tattoos Instagram @fortresstattoos



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Dirty Honey

Interview with vocalist Marc LaBelle

By Ryan Dyer

Dirty Honey are one of the few bands ensuring that pure rock and roll never goes out of style. Formed in 2017 by singer Marc LaBelle, guitarist John Notto, bassist Justin Smolian and drummer Corey Coverstone, the band has made big waves, opening for Guns n' Roses and KISS. This September, the band will make its first trek through Canada, playing Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver and Montreal. We catch up with vocalist Marc LaBelle to get some insight on the state of rock and the rise of Dirty Honey.

Absolute Underground: I first heard of your band as you were set to play Japan's Download Festival in 2020 and then COVID 19 happened. Interestingly, your band photo was the last one updated on their Facebook, which fans used as a forum to express their concerns about what was happening before the fest was officially postponed. What do you recall about this time period?

ML: It was just a little scary at first as things seemed more and more serious. Personally, it didn't take me very long to realize the hypocrisy

who are elder rockers - in their 50s, 60s and up! When it comes to traditional rock or classic rock, Dirty Honey is one of the few bands keeping the style alive. You have found success, but do you find it harder to reach the older demographic (perhaps they stick with the radio)? Likewise, when concerning the younger generation and Dirty Honey, how are the fans discovering you (as rock is not the most mainstream musical genre these days)?

LB: It's completely the Marshall McLuhan phrase "The medium is the message..." If fans are discovering us on radio they're probably older.

If they find us on Spotify, Tiktok, or YouTube they're probably a bit younger. I don't really worry about "who" we're reaching so much. I just try to

and stupidity in how we were dealing with it so I started spending more and more time outdoors and tried to use the time to do some things I wouldn't have otherwise been able to do. But all in all those two years have become a bit hazy.

AU: I've noticed a lot of fans commenting on your videos

make music that the band and I enjoy listening to and if you happen to like it, well, that means you have great taste!

AU: The artwork for your debut LP (and your logo) is a bit Rolling Stones-esque. You also have done covers for AC/DC and Aerosmith songs. For fans of those bands who haven't heard Dirty Honey, would you say you offer a similar sizzle?

ML: Definitely. The best compliment I've heard is that we're like a mix of GNR, Aerosmith, AC/DC, and The Black Crowes. It's fine with me.

AU: You released *Lockdown at the Viper Room* - a full length concert at the legendary venue. Could you tell us some behind the scenes info about this shoot?

ML: It was just a fun thing to do and a way to do something with our fans during lockdown. We wanted to shoot a lot of it handheld to give the audience that chaotic feeling of being in the first few rows of a Dirty Honey show instead of making it look all nice and clean.

AU: At the time of this writing, you've supported KISS and

Guns n' Roses. Could it get much bigger than that? Who else is on your bucket list to support?



ML: Aerosmith, AC/DC, and The Rolling Stones. Don't forget about Rival Sons and The Black Crowes too as I absolutely adore both of those bands.

AU: You played the Red Rocks amphitheater. I'd like to know about this experience. What is it like to play at such a naturally stunning venue?

ML: It's amazing. It's really a beautiful place so fans get there early to see whatever is playing on that stage and we were beneficiaries

of that magical experience. I can't imagine a better venue anywhere on the planet. Denver too is a great rock n roll town. I think the people there know it's a tough place to get to and they appreciate artists taking the time to put in some long drives to get there.

AU: Your tour is bringing you across Europe, the US and Canada. Which places are you looking forward to hitting the most?

ML: I really can't wait to see all these cities in Canada. I have a nice day off planned in Banff to get some hiking in. It'll be great to get exposed to yet another entire country that doesn't really know about us yet and show them what we're about. Specifically though I'm really excited to get back to Montreal after playing Heavy MTL and it being a great first show for us there as well as playing Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver for the first time.

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

ML: It's gonna be a fucking great tour. Don't miss the openers (Mac Saturn, Dorothy) cause once upon a time we were one, too.

Photo Credit : Scott Legato
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Eternal Closure

Interview with Olivier Boitel – Guitar, Back Vocals

Absolute Underground: Tell us who is Eternal Closure and what do you do?

Olivier Boitel: Hey guys! We're Eternal Closure and we're a Metalcore band from Montreal, Quebec. We blend our old-school sound with a more modern, proggy approach. Other than that, we like to joke around and share our love for these wonderful things called cats.

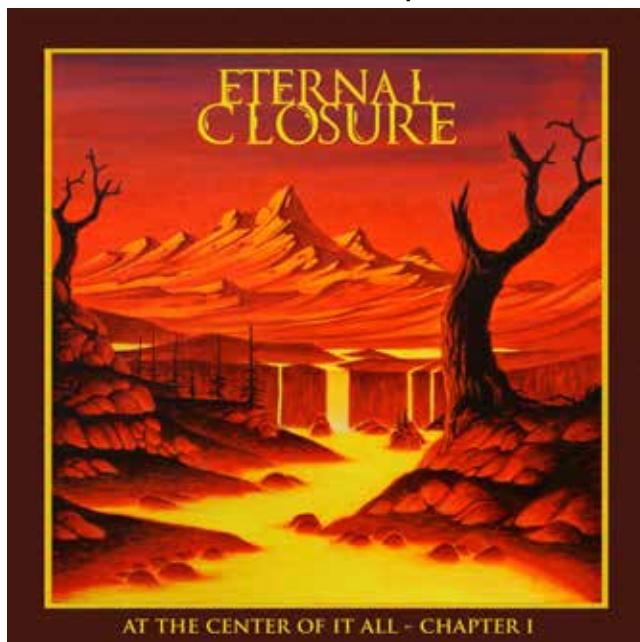
AU: You are releasing your third album *At the Center of It All – Chapter I*, what can you tell our readers about this record, compared to previous releases?

OB: There have been many

changes to our lineup in the last few years. Now that we have three guitarists in the band, it forced us to have bigger, more complete arrangements. We now have a female vocalist which helps a lot with vocal variety within the band as well. We've also put a bit more emphasis on the heavier side of us. Our second single, "Exiled," is definitely the softest track on *Chapter I* for sure.

AU: You produced this record with Christian Donaldson, what was that experience like, and shaping the sound of the record?

OB: It's always fun, working with Christian. I have been good friends with Chris since working with him on our first album in 2016. He's an absolute pleasure to work with



MONTREAL MASSACRE

and always comes up with ideas for vocal harmonies and little details on the guitar arrangements. It's seamless. Each album sounds better than the last one, and I'd like to think that it mirrors the band's evolution at the time.

AU: You have three guitarists in your lineup, how do you coordinate who does what in the live performances? And songwriting?

OB: I tend to write the basis for most songs. Phil and Marine (or both) then go to work on which song inspires them the most.

"Practice What You Preach," and "Exiled," were both greatly enhanced by them, helping me figure out all the little details that make a song special. As far as live shows go, it gets crowded for sure! We kind of end up playing a lot of the same thing when playing old songs, but at the same time we have the ability to play everything that's in the music and not rely on many backing tracks. We don't lose the rhythm guitar when we play harmonized leads, which is great.

AU: We checked out your awesome music video and track "Practice What You Preach," does the band have a message it's "preaching" to fans?

OB: Preaching open conversation and compassion. Too many people think they've got it all figured out and have very little nuance in the way they communicate. There are moments when

you need to play hard, but sometimes you also need to lend a hand or even just an ear.

AU: We read that *At the Center of It All – Chapter I* is only the first part of an album split in two, what can you tell fans about the second half?

OB: Both *Chapter I* and *II* kind of rhyme in a way. They both start with a longer, more progressive song, which is then followed by an instant banger, and so on...That's not to say any song sounds the same though. It's quite a varied collection of songs overall. I'd say *Chapter II* goes both softer and harder than *Chapter I*.

AU: How's the Montreal metal scene post Covid now? Did any venues survive? Are there lots of shows returning?

OB: It's not that easy to find show opportunities at the moment to be honest. For a local band like us, venues tend to still be a bit worried about things post-Covid. That whole situation was extremely rough on the local scene, and many of my friends in other bands just called it quits during the last two years. Things are looking up though. We played a show recently and it was a big success. Hopefully, it continues that way.

AU: Any tour plans for the band?

OB: Not at the moment. But if an interesting opportunity presents itself, we're absolutely gonna listen.

AU: Anything else you like to add?

OB: Please listen to our singles "Practice What You Preach" and "Exiled" if you haven't already! They both showcase our new lineup in different ways, and they really do represent what we do now accurately. *At the Center of It All – Chapter I* is out on September 23rd! Please tell us what you think when it releases!

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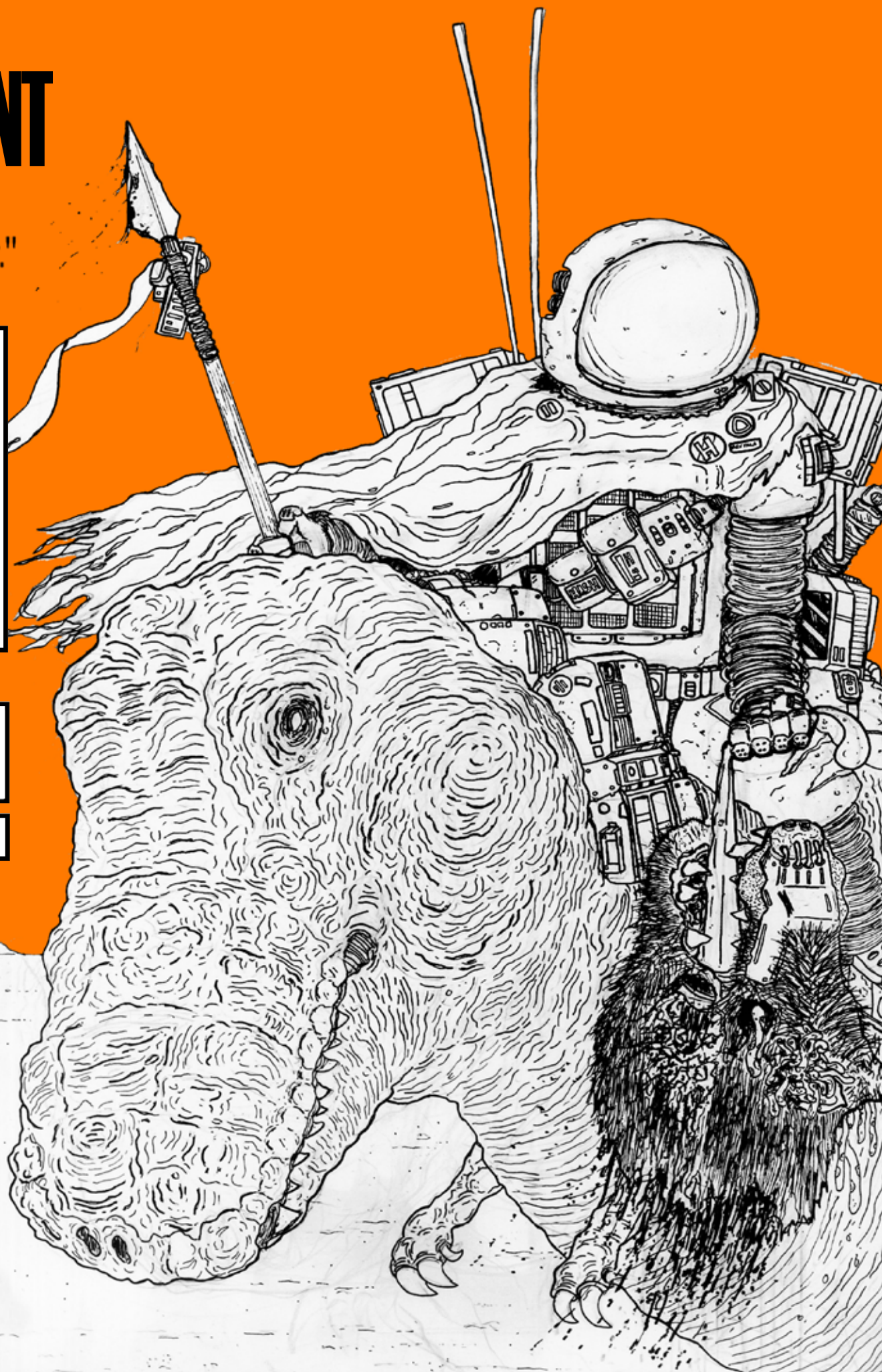
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Greber

Interview with Marc Bourgon

Absolute Underground: Welcome back to *Absolute Underground Mag*, Greber. Last time we spoke, you released 2018's *Cemetery Preston*. You have a new album dropping *Fright Without*, what can you tell fans about this new record?

Marc Bourgon: We are really excited to see the release of our newest record as it has been a long slog of an effort to get it all put together. On this record, we were a lot more fearless in trying new ideas and not too concerned with it fitting into any sort of genre-specific lane. There once was a time when I had a pretty clear idea about what things should sound like but over the years it's been abandoned to make room for whatever random influence or nuance presents itself when we are in the jam hall. We played these songs together for a long time before recording them whereas, with *Cemetery Preston*, a few of them were just written and then cranked straight into

the studio without much coagulation between Steve and I. All in, I think this is our best record today and also our weirdest.

AU: The band has been together for a decade. There's been lots of music released over the years and shows. What is your personal fave track to perform and what has been your favourite show as Greber?

MB: One of my favourite songs to perform was "The Closer We Got," which was the last track off *Cemetery Preston*. There is something cathartic about ripping that one and I always feel better at the end of a set where we've played it. In our current set, I would say my choice cut is "Tove Lough," taken from our split with Botfly, "Anthesis," "Cell Press," and "Clouds Become Oceans." It tallies up a lot of pain and frustration and feels good to open that sewer up every once in a while.

My favourite show would have to be when we played the Doom Palace in Kitchener Ontario. It was one of those religious, house-show experiences where no one in the room was safe and people were perpetually falling on top of

Steve, myself and all our gear. If there is a heaven that would be my version of it.

AU: In five words, what do you want fans to walk away with from this new album?

MB: Whoah, that was fucked up.

AU: You both have been in lots of other bands. How have you found it working as a duo compared to a full circle band?

MB: It's definitely way more difficult to put something together as a two-piece than it is as a full band. It's

something that I found gets more difficult every time we sit down to make a record. A part of me thinks like we are almost out of two piece ideas. I've been playing music with Steve for close to 20 years now and the seamlessness of our communication is pretty awesome. It's a nice ego-free collaborative experience when we are hashing something out. Not to say that it's otherwise in any other of the bands that we play in but with only one other person to communicate with it definitely speeds things up a lot. I do enjoy having more cooks in the kitchen. More perspectives and voices can demote a piece of music into something unrecognizably beautiful.

AU: Will the band playing any upcoming shows or touring for fans to check out?

MB: We have a slew of record release shows around southern Ontario in September and October but no plans for touring as of right now.

AU: We're heard even though you play sludgy

TORONTO TRASH

noise metal, you're both huge hip hop fans, if you ever did a collaboration with a hip hop artist, who would it be and why? And Do you think it's time for metal to re-embrace hip hop? Maybe a sludge noise hip track the least?

MB: This is completely true. Actually, one of the songs on *Fright Without* was written over a J Dilla beat. I don't know if the two styles mix all that well, to be honest. I feel like Rage Against the Machine was the summit of that hill and I haven't

really dug too deep into finding an act to top it. As far as collaboration is concerned I think it would be sick to do something with madLib or possibly Westside Gunn. They would most likely find our shit to be wack.

AU: Where can fans find your CDs, vinyls and cassettes?

MB: In Canada, you can order CDs/Vinyl/Cassettes from noFuneral records or Ancient Temple Recordings. In the US, Hibernation Release has vinyl up for order and in Europe

7Degrees Records and Fresh Outbreak will be taking care of the overseas vinyl orders.

AU: Anything else you like to add?

MB: Not really, just thank you so much for supporting our weird band over the years. We love and appreciate everyone who's stuck around or come out to a show or bought any of our music. We can't thank you enough. Peace.

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Charles Beckinsale - Part 3

Interview with Master Terrain Park Builder, Charles Beckinsale - Part 3

by Ira "Big Air" Hunter

Absolute Underground: What are the good mountains in Australia if someone was to head there to go snowboarding?

Charles Beckinsale: My favourite is Thredbo as far as the terrain goes. We get a handful of powder days each year that are pretty legit and that place is pretty fun. The runs are long. The longest one is 5.9 km, I think. So it's not too bad. It's also got a cool village up there where you can go have a beer afterwards. Then there is the resort called Perisher which has the terrain park where the reputation of Australia kind of took off a few years back. I ran the park there for about six years during its peak. I worked at Thredbo running the park program there for 12 years before that.

AU: My friend, Brydon, and I have snowboarded all over the world. We've been all over the Alps, we went to the Republic of Georgia to the Caucasus Mountains, we've been to Japan but I

haven't been to Australia yet. We want to go to Antarctica and snowboard with the penguins one day. We are basically collecting mountain ranges.

CB: I've been lucky enough to snowboard most places around the world. But for me it's always nice to snowboard at home. Australia has got these trees called snow gums and it's just pretty different to anywhere else you can snowboard. It's really unique. The thing about Jindabyne, where I live, it's nice because you're on a lake and then you've got the two major mountains in Australia right there on your doorstep. Then you've got Mount Hotham and Falls Creek and all those resorts that are in the Australian State of Victoria.

AU: Where is somewhere in the world you still really want to snowboard or build?

CB: I'd love to do a proper holiday in Switzerland. I feel like I am always working when I am there. Just to go somewhere in the Swiss Alps and ride powder would be pretty epic. I'd still love to do Alaska but not like the fucking crazy shit. Heliboarding would be up there for sure, I've never done that. I've been in Heli a bunch of times, but for scoping spots and getting to and from places, not actually getting dropped off on top of a mountain. So I'd

say Heliboarding in Alaska at one point would be the bucket list item.

AU: Do you have any advice for up and coming snowboarders that might want to go pro or people that want a career in the industry?

CB: For the snowboarder side of it, these days you've really got to put in the work as well as just snowboarding. Like you kind of have to be in the gym and look after yourself physically, just to be able to do the stuff that they're all doing now. Unfortunately social media seems like a big part of

why riders are valuable or considered valuable now. So I'd say it's more than just being good

on a snowboard these days. But I think if you want something bad enough you've just got to put the work in and not listen to people that say you can't do it. I'd just say give it your all if it's what you want to do. If it doesn't work out then maybe try and get something on the side. Like I did with park building and stay in it for the love of it. As far as the park building side of it goes I would say you've got to have some tenacity. You've really got to go after that as well. Maybe start at your local resort on the park crew. I had to volunteer, I think a lot of people have to volunteer at first to get a paid job with it eventually. My advice would be to do a year or two in the park getting to know the transitions intimately. Then try to get a chance to get in the snowcat and start grooming runs with the aim of getting in the park within a couple of years. But it's not a quick progression. You can't just rake a take off one season and jump in a cat the next and then be in the park the following year. It will probably take you three or four years before you can actually be in a park in a snowcat. So you've got to have the commitment to go the distance. I think it's more of you've got to love snowboarding and be happy to be in the mountains and not make a ton of money. Make sure you're in it for the lifestyle and the riding.

AU: So in the Australian summers you come to Whistler/Blackcomb usually?

CB: I used to do the park at Whistler/Blackcomb for about eight years. Mainly on Blackcomb. I did one year on Whistler when I started there. Then I ended up on Blackcomb doing the big jumps for about seven years. But I would always be at Thredbo and then Squaw Valley and then I was at Perisher and then Whistler. So I was always year round in the cat building parks. As far as getting good quick. That's my advice is go do a season in Australia and New Zealand and just tackle it year

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round, because there's no substitute for practice.

AU: The Blackcomb park has the intermediate jumps on the right side and then they have that pro park on the left side which has just monster sized jumps.

CB: You've got to have that progression. I think that's the most key thing in terrain parks, building

riders up to get to that. A lot of park builders just want to build like, big shit. I think the most common misconception in park building is, if you build this big jump it just guarantees that good riders will show up. Then the park program will get a lot of likes and a lot of engagement on Instagram.

At the end of the day I feel somewhere like Perisher where we had all the beginner, all the intermediate and advanced stuff and there's good progression there. People knew that Perisher had good beginner and good intermediate parks that would get them to that point. So it's like if

you don't build the big stuff with the progression for the local riders to work their way up to get to that, you are kind of setting yourself up to fail. Because unfortunately, resorts don't make the money on the big parks. They make the money on the people with season passes and the day passes coming to ride. So I definitely advise anyone that's building park to put a strong focus on that. So that you can grow the sport

and then have the high end stuff once you tick the other boxes. Definitely make sure you look at the everyday people and don't get too lost on trying to impress the best riders you have on the hill. Because that's a small minority compared to the bigger picture.

To be continued next issue...

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Tyrants of Chaos

Interview with Ryan Dyck

Absolute Underground: Welcome to *Absolute Underground*, for those unfamiliar with Tyrants of Chaos, who are you and who do you do?

Ryan Dyck: We are a metal band that hails from Lethbridge, AB.... we are a five-piece band that has been 'delivering the goods' in our area since 2015! TOC is just about to release our third album called *Relentless Thirst for Power* which includes 10 of our best-written songs to date! Exciting times are happening in the TOC camp!

AU: What's the meaning behind this album title?

RD: It deals with the ongoing struggles of world leaders and top politicians fighting for the top prize of dominance in our society and worldly assets. Their relentless strive for this at the cost

of the citizens involved.

AU: How does this new album compare to your previous releases 2019's *Into Oblivion* and 2016's *The Calm Before the Storm*?

RD: The new album is a step up from our previous work. We spend almost a year in the studio fine-tuning each

song and having everything sounding heavy and tight! This time we were playing to a click track unlike *Into Oblivion* which had a more live-off-the-floor feel. I think this album speaks for itself



on the power and songwriting ability of TOC. Our first album *The Calm before the Storm* was a variety of songs that each of us had in our pockets for years and laid them down in a quick turnaround. We really took the time perfecting our songs and recording them how we wanted them done this time and the result shows.

AU: We read that Phil is a war history nerd. Many songs in your catalog depict historically accurate events that occurred during various battles and times of war. Has Phil written a song yet on the current war with Ukraine and Russia?

RD: Phil is a big reader and comes up with all our song lyrics for our albums. I think our latest album shows his knowledge of old war history, like "Red Rage!" A battle song from the 1314's Scottish battles which plays out like a storybook to the listeners. I haven't heard from Phil if he has any

Ukraine or Russia lyrics yet but I'm sure that is down the pipeline.

AU: Curtiss is a huge NASCAR fan so we wrote the song "Lucky Dog" as a shout-out to all the NASCAR and racing fans out there. If he had the opportunity to race, what city would it be and which drivers would he love to win against?

RD: Oh yes, Curtiss is a huge NASCAR fan and the band knows this well... from

not jamming on race days to hearing on the phone Curtiss's background car noise! Ha... I'm not sure personally where he would want to race but Daytona comes to mind. Curtiss is racing on the

streets of Lethbridge every day so I'm sure as long as a person is beside Curt at a stop light he will end up in the front!

AU: We don't hear much about bands from Lethbridge, what can ya tell us about the metal scene there? What's the best venue? and other bands you recommend playing with?

RD: Lethbridge has a great metal scene with lots of bands that flow in and out of cities like Calgary and Edmonton. We have a tight group of bands here that instead of jockeying for position on each other we join and play shows together to show the might and flare of each band. A local venue called The Slice has been helping the metal scene here for years and once Covid hit the venues were fighting to stay open. Now that we can play again metal bands have stepped in to do shows for them and show support... let alone The Slice has the best thin crust pizza in town! We always have up-and-coming metal bands open for us so they can showcase their talents and we also do a lot of shows with bands from Calgary and beyond.

AU: Will Tyrants of Chaos do any touring this year?

RD: This year for TOC is going to be used for working on promoting our new album and playing as many shows as possible that we can for our fans. We plan on hitting 2023 hard on tour in Europe our in North America. It all depends on what the world's situation is and the Ole mighty dollar.

AU: Where can metal fans find your tunes?

RD: Metal fans can find our music on Bandcamp, I-tunes, Spotify or on our FB page and website Tyrantsofchaosband.com

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

RD: Thanks for adding TOC to your magazine and look forward to seeing the article! Up the Irons!

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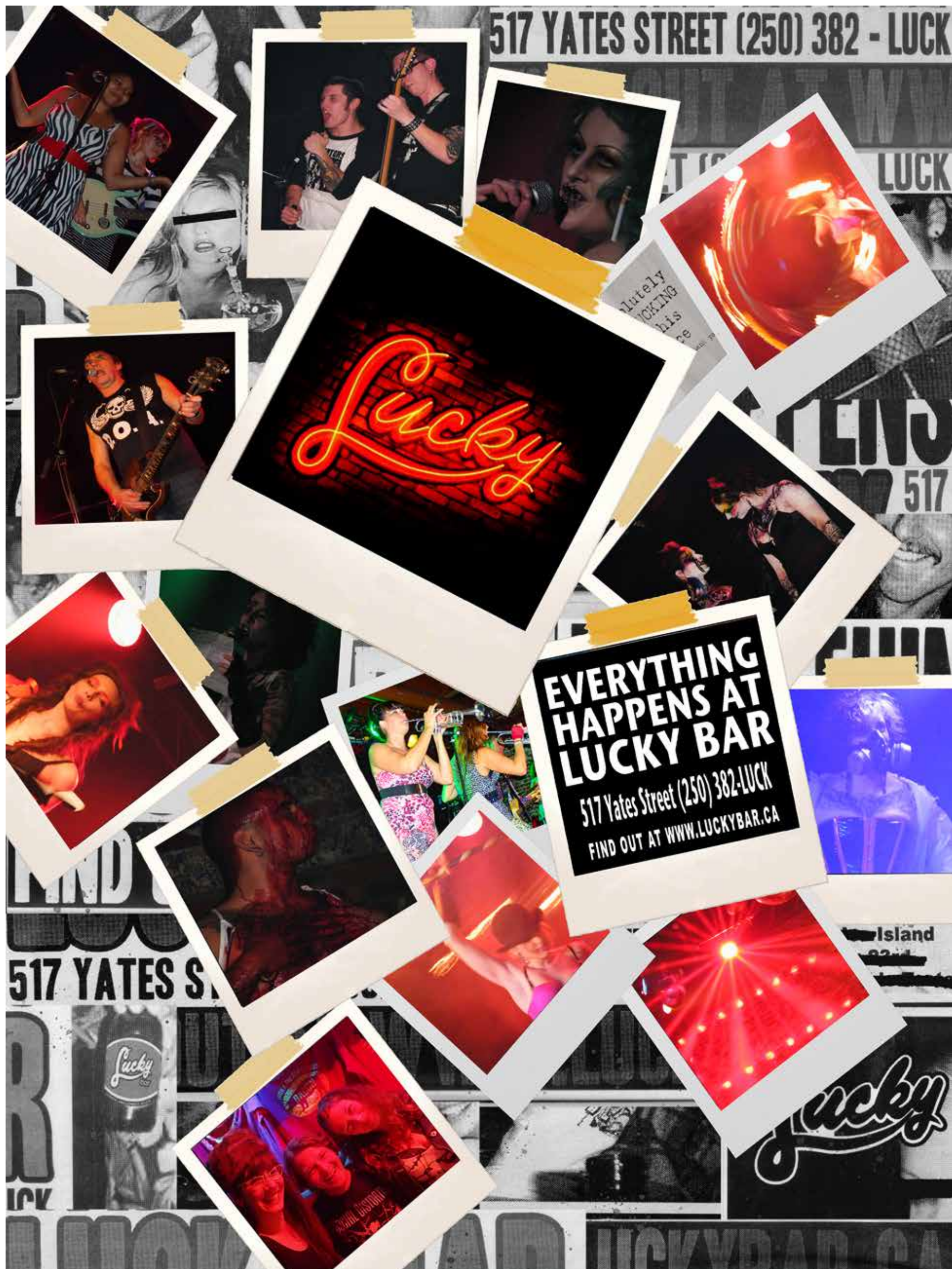
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Jack Sholder

Hidden Nightmares - Part 2

Interview with the director of *The Hidden*, *A Nightmare On Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge*, and *Alone In The Dark*.

By Ira "Horrorshow" Hunter

Absolute Underground: Where are you living these days?

Jack Sholder: I am living in Asheville, North Carolina.

AU: Have you ever directed any projects in Canada?

JS: I've shot in Vancouver a bunch of times. Victoria, I've been there. We actually shot for this film called *Generation X* at I think it's the Naval Academy. There is this big mansion. I think they shot some of the *X-Men* movies there.

AU: What was the inspiration for the body jumping in your film *The Hidden*?

JS: Jim Kouf was the writer who came up with the concept of it. He's a terrific writer and it was a great script. I read the script and I said I've got to talk New Line into hiring me to direct this movie because I felt like it just sort of fit into my psyche. I really got it on a visceral level and felt like I knew how to make it. I never really set out to be a horror film director. This was closer to what I had really wanted to do. I felt that there was a lot of interesting stuff in there. You have a good alien and a bad alien and they both come to earth. One is learning what it means to be a bad human being and having a lot of fun being a bad human being. The other one is learning how to be a good human. I thought it was really interesting from that point of view. Plus I've always been a huge admirer of Sidney Lumet. He made the greatest cop movies like *Dog Day Afternoon* and all of those. So I kind of saw it as my chance to do a Sidney Lumet movie with aliens.

AU: Was it one of the first movies to use the body jumping technique? Because that's been used a million time since then.

JS: It was yes. It's been copied. I know that New Line sued several different people and the idea has been used more than once. Ironically, I even got hired to do a pilot for a TV series called *The Omen*. But the concept was really *The Hidden*. It was about this body jumping thing and they hired me to do the pilot. Rather than saying, how dare you steal this idea. I said Okay, I'll do it. It was a really good concept and we executed it extremely well.



AU: What was Kyle MacLachlan like to work with? Was this before after he did *Twin Peaks*?

JS: This was before he'd done *Twin Peaks*. Some people have even suggested that David Lynch was inspired by Kyle's role in *The Hidden* to create the FBI guy in *Twin Peaks*. But I can't imagine that. I think he's a much more original thinker than that. But Kyle was terrific. I've been lucky to have worked with some really amazing actors. The likes of James Earl Jones and Martin Landau and a lot of really great actors. Kyle's performance I thought was stunningly good.



AU: Maybe David Lynch was inspired by *The Hidden* because in *Twin Peaks* there is kind of body jumping with the evil Bob character going into different people, so yeah, I wonder.

JS: I wonder, maybe, who knows.

AU: You are featured in the documentary called *Scream, Queen! My Nightmare on Elm Street* about *A*

***Nightmare on Elm Street Part 2* star Mark Patton. What was your take on the finished product?**

JS: I thought it was a very well done documentary. Basically, Mark was a closeted gay man. Whose agent told him you must not let anybody know that you're gay or it will ruin your career. He was highly ambitious, he wanted to be a movie star and he was well on the way. When we cast him it never occurred to anybody that there was a gay subtext. I mean, there's certainly gay elements in the script. But I had always thought of it as being about teen sexual anxiety and in a sense Freddy kind of represents that or exploits that in the character. He and I had a very good professional relationship. But we had no personal relationship whatsoever. It wasn't like I hung out with him. He was kind of morose I would say and I never quite understood it. Until of course, you know, I saw him at the cast and crew screening and then I never saw him again. Honestly I really didn't think about the movie very much. Because for me it was a stepping stone to getting a career as a director and I just kind of moved on. Then I got this invitation to go to a 30th reunion of the movie at a horror convention in Florida and I met Mark. At that point he had a film crew that was covering him that was working on *Scream, Queen!* I was there, Robert Rusler was there and some other people from the cast were there. So it was a good opportunity for them to film interviews and he filmed an interview with me.

He had sort of gone on about how David Chaskin, the writer had this secret agenda to put in this gay subtext and all that. It just seemed to me like, well okay, let bygones be bygones and move on with your life. I didn't quite get what it meant to Mark. I had kind of known that it was sort of gotten this reputation as the gayest horror film or whatever. When the film came out nobody picked it up, except the *Village Voice* which is the alternate newspaper in New York. They called it the gayest horror movie of all time, or words to that effect.

We all thought it was very funny because none of us had, it never occurred to any of us. It was not part of our thinking. In fact it hadn't even occurred to Mark until somebody from the makeup department or th art department said do you realize there is a gay subtext here and then he kind of freaked out. Because that was exactly the thing that he was trying to keep under wraps, given what was going on at that time. Mark and I have since had a number of encounters going to some of these conventions and I have really gotten to know him, and he's gotten to know me. I really think of him as a good friend now.

ABSOLUTE HORROR

So it's kind of been a very interesting trip. I have to say that none of it was ever our intention. I mean, obviously there's a scene in gay bar. That whole topic, if you're scared about your sexuality. If you were gay in the early 80s in 1980-81 when



we made the film, it was not a good thing. You had to keep it under wraps, you could get fired, you could get arrested, you could lose your career. But the fact that it has sort of become iconic for that reason and I've actually seen a lot of people who respond to it on a personal level because of that.

AU: You also directed *Wishmaster 2: Evil Never Dies*. Another sequel, how did you approach it and try to up the game from the first one?

JS: I honestly never thought that the first one was very good. In

fact, ironically, they had offered me the first one and I said I was not interested. So after the first one came out and it did pretty well. Things were kind of slow and my agent said listen they've offered you to do the sequel. Honestly, I had a family, I had to pay the rent and I thought, well it's got an interesting premise. I mean what if you



could get whatever you wished for but whatever you wished for it tended not to work out? Kind of again, the unexpected consequences. So I thought that could be interesting and the deal was that I could write it as well as direct. So I thought great. I can take the concept and use my own sensibility. I think it's got a fair amount of humor in it since I find it very hard to take a horror film seriously. I recent read an interview and there's a quote that said, I don't find horror films scary. I mean dying is scary getting cancer is scary. Having somebody show up at my front door with a chainsaw is not something I really worry about. So I thought that I would have some fun

with it, which I did. It was a very interesting and enjoyable experience. It's like a whole potpourri of ideas that are scattered in there. The Russian mafia and a whole bunch of other things. I thought, well what would be places where people would really wish for things. Like Las Vegas in a casino, I wish I could win a lot of money. Then I thought prison. Prison would definitely be a place. I wish I could get out, I wish I could kill these people who put me in here. So I thought I could have fun with the concept.

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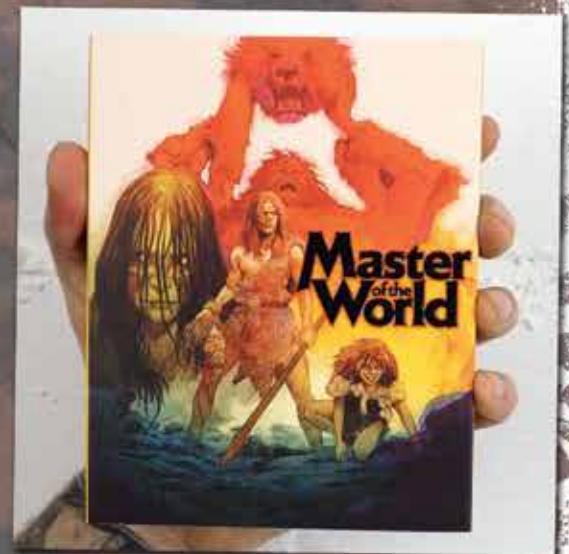
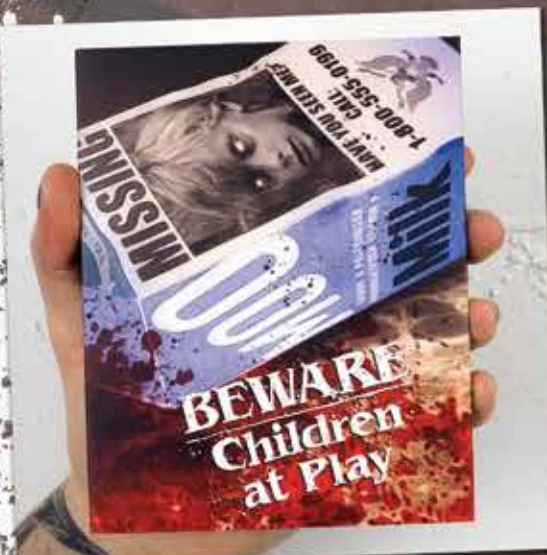
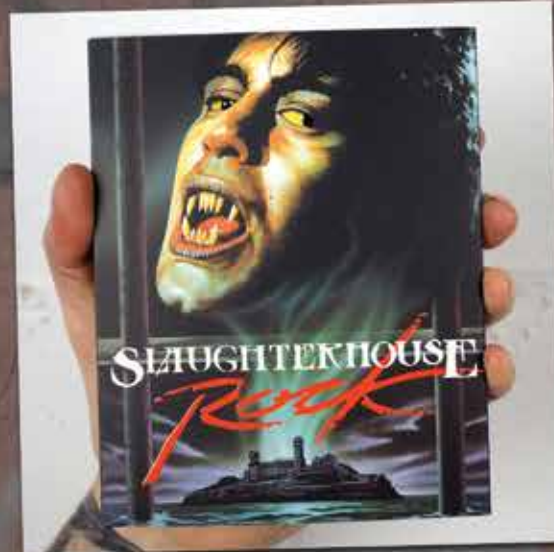
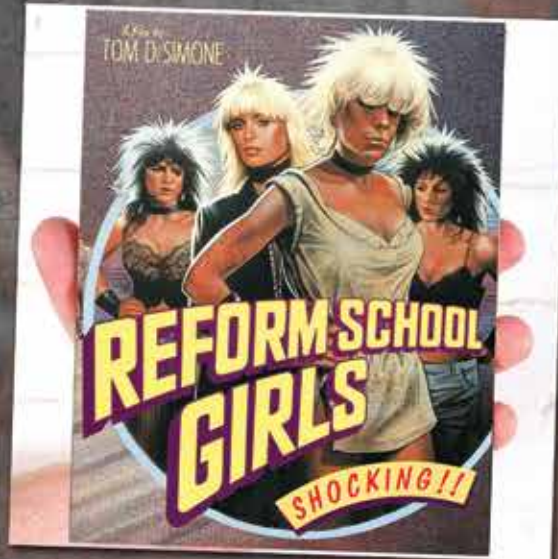


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The Beauty of Gialli

By Vince D'Amato

Ah, the Italian giallo, my tip-top favourite of favourite film genres, invented by Mario Bava and popularized by the famous Dario Argento in the early 1970s with *Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, *Deep Red* (*Profondo Rosso*) and the most famous, *Suspiria*; typically hybridizing the horror and detective-procedural genres, generally to great effectiveness and crowd-pleasing results, no matter the director – although there were a few true masters of the genre, like Umberto Lenzi, Sergio Martino, Luciano Ercoli, and Mario Bava's own son, Lamberto Bava. The giallo also transcended the women-in-peril slant of the horror genre the elevating the leading women into proactive characters who are a driving force behind solving the procedural murder-mysteries, and the following few hundred words is really just a celebration of the actors behind these characters. That's not to say that the women in the various gialli were never in peril themselves (fictionally speaking), but these female characters were not just fodder for the black-gloved killers' knives, either (and/or other instruments of death and mayhem). And from



the cult resurgence/rediscovery of this genre in the early 2000s thanks to Anchor Bay came a renewed and somewhat broadened cult fan-following of some of the "regular" actresses that were featured in these films throughout the 1970 and 1980s. What actually reminded me of all this was the recent Blu-ray reissues of a couple of very cult-y titles from this canon, *Cry of a Prostitute* and *The Devil's Wedding Night*, which were cleaned up and re-released by genre label Code Red (and distributed through Kino Lorber).

Cry of a Prostitute was directed by Italian exploitation auteur Andrea Bianchi, director of *Strip Nude for your Killer*, *Malabimba – The Malicious Whore*, and *Burial Ground: Nights of Terror*; and starred famous giallo actress Barbara Bouchet, who was possibly even more famous than her prolific and beautiful colleague Edwige Fenech (pronounced Fe-nek) – the two actresses appeared together in the sex comedy *Sex with a Smile*, directed by Sergio Martino. But on the giallo front, Bouchet was the absolute stand-out for several cult-favourite productions, including *The Back Belly of the Tarantula*, *Amuck!*, *The Red Queen Kill 7 Times* (which was the follow-up to its more famous giallo sibling, *The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave*), and probably most famously, in Lucio Fulci's *Don't Torture a Duckling*. All this was through the early-to-mid seventies, after she'd starred as the "Money Penny" character in the James Bond spoof *Casino Royale* in 1967.

Not quite as famous, but no less beautiful, the strong-featured Rosalba Neri got a nice featured part in *The Devil's Wedding Night*, which was a little more horror-exploitation than traditional giallo.



But Rosalba Neri was no stranger to that genre either, lending her talents to the far more erotically-slanted films of the giallo genre, including Fernando de Leo's *Slaughter Hotel* and *The Seducers* (in which she also starred with famed gialli actress Edwige Fenech); she worked alongside Barbara Bouchet in *Amuck!* and *The French Sex Murders*; and for director Jess Franco in one of the best women-in-prison films from that era, *99 Women*; all before landing her featured role in *The Devil's Wedding Night* as the famous "real-life vampire" Countess Elizabeth Bathory, who legend tells us bathed in the blood of hundreds of virgin girls, effectively making Bathory one of the most prolific serial killers who ever existed.

I love both Barbara Bouchet's and Rosalba Neri's bodies of work in these Italian genre films, along with, of course, their slightly more famous colleagues, the classic European performers

Edwige Fenech and Susan Scott (Nieves Navarro) and British actress Suzy Kendall, who worked with three of the top giallo masters: Daria Argento, Sergio Martino, and Umberto Lenzi, along with making a couple of British-produced gialli, *Assault* and *Fear is the Key*. Fun fact: Rosalba Neri's daughter Francesca Neri became a working Hollywood actress, co-starring in the Arnold

Schwarzenegger vehicle *Collateral Damage* and the *Silence of the Lambs* sequel *Hannibal*. Thinking back on all of this also reminded me of what was one of the most underrated Italian genre actresses in my opinion, the dark-haired stoic supporting actress Lorraine De Selle, who graced the screen in the harsher side of the Italian genre films and brought a sort of gravitas to the exploitation films of Ruggero Deodato, Umberto Lenzi, and Bruno Mattei (Vincent Dawn), when she starred in *The House at the Edge of*

the Park (the Italian take on Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left*), *Cannibal Ferox* (aka "Make Them Die Slowly", one of the stand-outs of the Italian cannibal subgenre of the 1980s), and the "un"-official *Emanuelle* series that featured Laura Gemser, *Violence in a Women's Prison* (in which she played the Head Warden), and

Women's Prison Massacre.

Those last two women-in-prison films were incidentally re-issued by genre specialists Shout Factory in the USA.

Of all of these performers, Lorraine De Selle was probably the least conventionally beautiful, yet she exuded an on-screen presence that was nothing short of magnetic. As an actress, she did struggle with the

exploitive elements in the films she was cast in, specifically the sexualization in Deodato's *House on the Edge of the Park*; but Deodato, as a filmmaker, was actually one of the country's true genre auteurs, his claim to fame *Cannibal Holocaust* was regarded by cult fans as the first true "found-footage" horror film and the real inspiration behind *The Blair*

ABSOLUTE HORROR



Witch Project, which had been unduly credited as "inventing" the genre in 1999 without a hint or a mention of Deodato's groundbreaking 1980 horror film. Sadly, this wasn't the first nor the last instance of Italian genre films influencing American horror and going uncredited for doing so. To be truthful, I actually preferred Deodato's cannibal follow-up *Cut and Run*, which starred a severely underrated American horror actress, Lisa Blount, who was the star of John Carpenter's *Prince of Darkness* and appeared in Gary Sherman's cult classic *Dead & Buried*. Fun fact: at one point in her career, Lisa Blount won an actual Academy Award – and the story behind this, and her ties to actor Walton Goggins, and her mysterious death, is another tale for another time...

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From Punk Rock Parking Lot to Punk in Drubric, Cursed Blessings is Everywhere

The sweltering summer of 2022 continues to be the "Season of the Safety Pin" for Toronto upstart label Cursed Blessings Records. From releasing outstanding vinyl and digital albums to landing spots on some of the most coveted shows, the label's eclectic stable of acts have been firing on all cylinders.

"Our bands have been working incredibly hard over the past few months" declared label kingpin Al Nolan (of Almighty Trigger Happy infamy). "Our mantra is, 'Play Like You're Supposed to Be Here' and our roster is definitely living up to that expectation!"

Label newcomers Citizen Rage (Calgary, AB), Siksika punkers No More Moments, TO legends Random Killing, and Spanish-singing crust darlings Maldita have all been touring Canada extensively throughout the late spring and summer months to enthusiastic and large crowds. BC skate-punks Fully Crazy invaded California and Washington state recently and London Ontario sweethearts Mvll Crimes have been in very high demand, supporting the likes of Propagandi

and Comeback Kid on recent gigs. Upcoming shows for other label artists include Toronto hardcore kings Dragged In (fresh off their amazing supporting gig for the legendary Circle Jerks) and the aforementioned Random Killing will be featured on the return of the insanely popular Punk Rock Parking Lot in Toronto in September. A joint production between Shacklands and



Rainhard Brewing Companies, this now annual event is a highlight of the Toronto summer concert schedule! Further to this incredible show announcement, BC punk trio Modern Terror have landed themselves a HUGE gig as part of the Punk In Drubric music and craft beer festival in Abbotsford BC in early September.

Sharing the stage with the likes of NOFX, The Descendents and Pup is not uncommon for these guys who have had the pleasure of supporting such acts at sold out shows in the recent past. Their debut EP "Going Viral" dropped on

Cursed Blessings in the spring and has received rave reviews from fans, industry and media throughout the world.

Cursed Blessings is also the Home of Legends it would appear. Canadian punk icon Richard Duguay (of Personality Crisis) is gearing up to release his Cursed Blessings debut *Beautiful Decline* in the coming months. Duguay is in a class by himself, cited by many as a driving force and influence on punk rock around the globe. Random Killing will drop their newest (and likely BEST) album *Bring Out Your Dead* in the fall as well as punk trailblazers Almighty Trigger Happy, who will re-issue some classic tracks on an LP entitled *Blood Red & Forever Blue*, and Santa Cruz hardcore legend Russ Rankin completes his

Cursed Blessings hat trick with the release of his EP "Our Father's Sons", which was recorded by Bill Stevenson (ALL/Descendents/Black Flag/Only Crime) at the iconic Blasting Room in Ft Collins Colorado.

Keep an eye out for this label and their incredible roster, coming soon to a town near you!! Don't see their releases in your favorite local record shop? DEMAND THEM! You will not be disappointed.



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Blacked Out

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Morgan Farrell: We are Blacked Out from Vancouver, and we're best known for being that band that people can't believe are still together.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band (from what previous bands) and what are you guys all about?

MF: Blacked Out is:

Ryan Walker (Real Problems, Wolfrum)

Wade McLeod (The Dirt, Fake Teeth)

Lee Lundgard (To The Nines, Fastham, Wolfrum, Staggers & Jaggs)

Morgan Farrell (ATD, Bishops Green, Authorities)

The band started in Banff, Alberta back in 2004 as a three-piece with Ryan, Wade, and Morgan. We basically just drove around the country drinking

BLACKED OUT

Jack Daniels while Morgan yelled incoherently about politics at unsuspecting crowds. After moving to Vancouver in 2009 we started playing the local scene quite a bit, and we did the Alberta/BC circuit regularly - usually in the winter for some dumb reason. Even though we got to play some rad shows with awesome bands, we certainly didn't have much direction in those early years. It wasn't until we added Lee to the lineup in 2017 that things really kinda came together for us. Bringing a second guitar and a more melodic voice into the mix really changed our songwriting and ramped up the complexity of our music. Our first batch of new songs got picked up by Thousand Islands Records and we released "Wasted Breath" with them on March 27, 2020.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

MF: We've been described as a blend of melodic hardcore and skatepunk with a dash of thrash, and we're pretty ok with that description.

AU: Have you released an album recently?

MF: As mentioned earlier, we released a five-song EP called "Wasted Breath" on Thousand Islands Records in 2020. It's not really new anymore, but because we put that record out right at the beginning of the pandemic (not the most ideal time) we weren't really able to tour it properly so we still feel like we need to get out there and push it. We do have a whole full-length written though, which we're recording in the fall for a spring release. We've started introducing some of the new ones into our sets, so if you wanna hear some of our new tunes all you have to do is come out to a show!

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

MF: We've always been a pretty political band, but lately we've been looking inward a bit and exploring more personal topics like mental health and substance use in addition to our usual complaints about the world.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

MF: From "Wasted Breath" it would be the title track. We did a video for it with Rob Zawistowski, which you can find on YouTube. The new batch of songs are still a little too new to pick a stand-out yet because we're pretty stoked on all of them at the moment!

AU: Any career highlights or lowlights to date that you can share?

MF: We did a tour with Belvedere once the pandemic restrictions were starting to lift, and that was a pretty great time in our band's history. Also, Thousand Islands Records has been wonderful to work with so signing with them would definitely be considered a highlight as well. Lowlights? Ugh. We'd rather not go down

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

that road. If we had to pick one, let's just say the "Canmore Hotel Incident" and leave it at that.

AU: What's the current live music scene in Vancouver like? Any other wicked local bands people should check out?

MF: The live music scene in Vancouver is amazing right now, especially for punk rock. There are too many awesome local bands to list, so this is a difficult question to answer. The Corps, Contra Code, Alien Boys, Bootlicker, ATD, Rong, Invasives... The list is endless. Sorry to everyone we didn't mention!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

MF: Yes! We have a busy fall coming up! We're headlining the first annual Victown Punk Fest in Victoria on August 27. We're also playing the Wise Hall in Vancouver on September 3, the Terminal Bar in Nanaimo on September 9, Outhouse Fest on Pender Island on September 10, and a couple other things in October that haven't been announced yet so we can't mention them here. Follow us on Instagram and/or facebook and we'll keep you updated!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

MF: Thanks to everyone who has supported us over the years! We really appreciate it. Also, to the poor housekeeper from the Canmore Hotel - we're sorry.

AU: How do people find you online?

MF: @blackedoutband is the handle we use for all the socials, or search for wasted breath and watch our video!

[instagram.com/blackedoutband](https://www.instagram.com/blackedoutband)

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The Ramores

“Have the Rolling Stones Killed....”

Back in October of 2007 I went to Lucky Bar to see a Ramones tribute band out of Vancouver I knew nothing about. I recall Black Flab was on the bill. I was just starting out shooting live music. Years later I look back on the many wild Ramores gigs I've shot at various venues (mostly Tavern of the Damned) since and thought, it's high time to pay tribute to this tribute.

In 2000 the Ramores played their first gig at The Java Joint in Surrey, BC. This tribute to New York punk legends, The Ramones, has since played over 60 gigs with over 20 different “cast” members. Check out the loaded roster at the end of this story.

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking with and how are you connected to the Ramores?

Joey Ramore. Singer, founding member.

AU: How did this all come about? Was the foundation for The Ramores created from The Jolts?

JR: The Ramores actually predate the Jolts by about five years. We came up with the idea when my band at the time, The Bitchin' Cow-Punk

Massacre, couldn't find anyone to open a Halloween gig we booked at the Java Joint in Surrey. My good friend Erik (Ricky Ramore) and I decided we could just put on wigs and do 10 Ramones songs – how hard could it be? We put the word out on the BC Punk List (the local punk message board) that we were looking for a rhythm section and ended up with Rob from The Retreads (Robbie Ramore) and Kristen (Billy Ramore) from Blue Collar Bullets, completing the original lineup. We originally practiced in my parents' garage but would eventually jam in the back room at the Java Joint.

AU: The name?

JR: We had a few stupid names we kicked around originally, but then Ricky suggested we use The Ramores. That name came about because in my grade 12 annual I had thanked all my favorite bands, but because of my sloppy writing, I ended up thanking “The Ramores.” We thought it was funny.

AU: You decided to play a certain early era of the band. How did you come to that decision?

JR: We originally picked whatever songs we felt like doing (we definitely played “R.A.M.O.N.E.S.” and “Spiderman” at our early shows), but as we started taking it more seriously, we just gravitated to the first four albums. The energy of those songs is just so simple and pure. By 2007, when the rest of The Jolts guys fully joined, we wanted a template to work off of, so we just did It's Alive from start to finish for a while.

AU: Will fans ever hear “Durango 95” opening a Ramores show?

JR: We started all our gigs with “Durango 95” in the early days, but with so many great songs to choose from, I usually prefer to get right to the classics (and I just love the instant chaos when we start with “Rockaway Beach”).

AU: Have you ever been in communication

with anyone from The Ramones?

JR: No. Never meet your idols, right? Although Evan (Vinnie Ramore) and Dylan (Donny Ramore) opened CJ Ramones' UK tour dates in 2018 with The Isotopes.

AU: What do you do to stay as authentic as possible to the actual Ramones?

JR: Not sure if there's anything we do consciously, besides leather jackets and pizza. The current lineup all learned how to play instruments from listening to the Ramones, so it's pretty easy to channel the attitudes and sounds of our favourite band.

AU: Some of your stage banter is excerpted from Ramones gigs. I noticed “I'd just like to say this gig sucks!” from the Ramones Simpsons appearance, sometimes draws a confused look from some who don't know the reference.

JR: I love to pull stage banter directly from live recordings, and that one is just perfect. We've played the Happy Birthday song that they do on the Simpsons, as well.

AU: Memorable gigs?

JR: We played Keithmas (the annual Keith Richards birthday foodbank fundraiser) one year when the Jolts weren't able to do it and put together an awesome set of four Rolling Stones songs as the Ramones. I'm sure it confused a lot of people.

We also got asked to play the first gig at CBDB's (now Bullet Farm), doing all of *Rocket to Russia*, to a crowd that pogo'd until the whole building was shaking and the wooden floor was bouncing.

AU: What was the funniest/ or unusual thing to ever happen at a Ramores show?

JR: Our first big gig was Naughty Camp 2001. I think we played at noon on the Sunday, in front of a 100% hungover crowd. During “The Crusher”, two women in luchador masks jumped on stage for a fight. Also, wig mishaps have been common over the years, but I think we have it figured out now.

AU: Are there plans to build on to the show in the future, or keep it status quo? (later material... a Schlitzie Pinhead maybe...?)

JR: Our plan is to get back on track, performing all the Ramones albums chronologically. We've done the first three now and are working on getting *Road to Ruin* and *End of the Century* ready to go.

Hey ho, let's go!

Current lineup

* Joey (Sean) - vocals - The Jolts

* Donny (Dylan) - bass - guitar - Dylan Rysstad, The Jolts, Isotopes Punk Rock Baseball Club, The Projectors, The Mandelbaums, The Badamps, Neo Nasties

* Grassy (Shane) - bass - Sore Points, Nervous Talk, Hot Blood Bombers

* Daddy (Trevor) - Sore Points, Nervous Talk, The Ballantynes

Former Members

* Ricky (Erik) - guitar

* Billy (Billy) - drums - Blue Collar Bullets, Billy the Kid, Billy Pettinger

* Robby (Rob) - bass - The Retreads, The McCrackins

* Nicky (Nicky) - drums - The Hextalls

* Vinnie (Evan) - bass - The Jolts, Isotopes Punk Rock Baseball Club, The Kidnappers

* Matty (Matt) - drums - The Jolts, Street Legal Dirt Bike, All Star Assassins

* Marko (Mark) - drums

* Lucky (Lucas) - guitar - The Spinoffs, The Chick Magnets, Tarleks

* Shitty (Shane) - guitar - The Badamps, The Spinoffs, The Radii

* Snakey (Matt) - bass - Battle Snakes, Shitty Neighbors

* JJ (Josh) – bass - The Jolts, Fashionism, Chain Whip, Greenback High


* Huey (Evan) - bass - guitar - The Jolts, Tang, Oswald

* Juicy (Jeske) - guitar - The Wanna-Be's, Hanzai

* Minnie (Chris) - guitar - Repossessors, The Get Highs

Chat/ images John Carlow/ Finding Charlotte Photography & the Ramores

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The Furys

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

JW: This is Jeff Wolfe here, lead singer and songwriter since the inception of The Furys in 1977. My infancy is legendary but I don't want to scare some of your readers.

AU: What first got you interested in music?

JW: As a child, I was a huge fan of Johnny Horton, Rick Nelson, and Elvis. My mom was an amateur folk singer so I had that influence growing up, too. My dad was a huge jazz aficionado so American roots music was engrained since my earliest days. I grew up in a black and white world in Manitowoc, Wisconsin where only the Beach Boys provided any musical salvation. In February of 1964, I saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, this changed my black and white world into technicolor. The Rolling Stones, the Yardbirds, Bob Dylan, the Who and the Byrds were about to explode, by 1965, my family was living in southern California where teen rock n roll TV shows were on all over the place. It was a very fortunate breeding ground for a music hungry youngster like myself.

AU: Please give us a history of the band.

JW: I started writing songs with my high school pal, Gregg Embrey, in the mid 70s. Since the popular music of this era was so lousy-with notable exceptions, I decided the only way to get ahead was to record and release our own single, which we did in 1977. We actually got local radio airplay and sold out the first run of 500 copies. So we manufactured more and that run sold out, too.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

JW: In the early days we were compared to the who and the Rolling Stones quite a bit, which was fine because I loved them. As time went on, we incorporated

some ska elements-before any band in southern California did, I might add. I loved Desmond Dekker and the Aces. By then we knew about what was happening in England so the Clash and Elvis Costello were contemporaries. Bob

Dylan was and is a huge influence on my writing.

AU: The Furys are known as one of LA's oldest punk bands. What was the scene like when you were first starting out? What other bands were around in the scene?

JW: During the 70s, The Furys straddled Los Angeles and Orange County. So, in OC we played rec rooms, garages, schools, movie theatres as there were no real venues for this music until the Cuckoo's Nest in Costa Mesa started booking the band. By February of '78, we were playing the Whisky A Go Go. In 2018 we played there again for The Furys 40th anniversary of our first gig there; thank god it was packed. Some audience members were singing along even though they probably weren't born when those records were released. The Furys were also the first punk/new wave band to play Madame Wong's in Chinatown, which opened up a whole other scene.

During this timeframe we played shows with so many of the original bands: The Zeros. The Last. The Zippers. The Plimsouls, whose first gig

was opening for us at the Cuckoo's Nest-and the Weirdos and the Motels. Jeff Jourard of the Motels and Cliff Roman from the Weirdos are now with The Furys on guitars; it's a mighty sound.

AU: Who else is in the band with you and what do they bring to the table? Are they original members as well?

JW: After numerous issues and line up changes, The Furys split in 1988. By that time, I was seriously invested in going back to my country and western and early rock n roll roots. I formed a band called the Horse Soldiers that I ran for 25 years playing hundreds of gigs throughout the Southwest. In 2012, I made the decision to start singing The Furys songs again and have been active in that endeavor ever since. I've had the privilege of having Dave Lewty in the band these last eight years. Dave is the longest serving member. He and I have written dozens of fine songs and have played a number of eventful gigs. Dave's a monster bass player but he's also adept on many other instruments. Indeed, our latest release The Furys again, is primarily Dave and I along with a couple of friends helping out here and there on backing vocals and piano. As I mentioned earlier, Dave and I are very pleased to have Jeff Jourard and Cliff Roman with us on guitars. They bring their expertise and vast knowledge to the group.

AU: Are you aware that there was a band called the Furies who were one of the very first Canadian punk bands?

JW: Nope, I didn't know that. In 1988 a group called The Furies from San Francisco contacted me, apologizing for using the name without my knowledge. They were very acquiescing, it was sweet, I suggested we play a gig together at Club Lingerie.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

JW: Our latest album, as I mentioned earlier, is The Furys again, which Dave Lewty and I recorded at his studio during the Covid crisis. It came out great: lots more influences than the earlier records but it still has that punky edge on a lot of the numbers. We've been charting with the

singles from it on numerous global Indie charts. It's available through all the usual suspects (Amazon, iTunes, Bandcamp, etc) as well as thefurysband.com/

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

JW: We address the degeneration of the culture in "Tightrope Walking," a man's obsession with a female serial killer in "Anna, Come Home," aging in an indifferent world in "Worthy," insomnia in "The day that was that really wasn't," the never-ending rebellion of youth in "Action Reaction." "Miss Havisham Regrets" is an homage to Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, there's a tribute to surrealist author Franz Kafka in "Please Mister Kafka." All the while, though, it's a rockin' thing.

AU: What's the craziest thing to ever happen during one of your live performances?

JW: A lot of crazy stuff happened during the 70s era, but for me, the craziest of all was at a gig the band was playing in a storage locker in San Diego (I kid you not). The place was jam packed, of course there was no stage, everybody was leaping about and yelling as we were performing. Unexpectedly, the power went out. No lights, no sound, complete blackness. Gary Embrey, our drummer, kept playing however and I kept yelling and the kids at the venue continued to jump around and go nuts, all in complete and utter darkness!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

JW: A fourteen track compilation album of all The Furys' recorded work including the three singles, the mini album we did at EMI, the 2015 single "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" and two new songs "Without You" and "Everybody's New" is forthcoming on Arcane Alley Records. We'll be releasing a 7" colored vinyl single with picture sleeve culled from this album. We're also planning an EP of all new songs by The Furys for Fall 2022.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

JW: Stay happy, stay healthy, keep on rockin'!

thefurysband.com/



Black Dogs

Interview by Chuck Andrews and Daz

Absolute Underground:
Who are we speaking with
and what are most known
for?

Ray: Ray from Black Dogs. I
also played in a band called
Dead City Disease years ago.

**AU: How long has Black
Dogs been around and
where are you guys from?**

Ray: The current line up
has been going for about
two years. We had a couple
different line ups prior to this



one and played a handful of shows and released
"Battalion" 7" at the end of 2020. We are all from
Winnipeg.

AU: What are your guys biggest influences?

Ray: Not surprisingly,
we're mostly influenced
by 80's British punk and
Oi! bands. We also all grew
up and got into punk and
oi! in the 90s so bands
like Oxymoron and The
Subversives are a big
influence. We all like a lot
of other stuff as well but
that's the common thread.

**AU: How's the skinhead
scene in Winnipeg?**

Ray: The Punk and
Skinhead scene in

Winnipeg is better
than it has been for
many years. Lots
of great people
and newer bands. All with a positive attitude
and nobody is stepping on anyone else's toes.
Everyone is extremely supportive of each other
which is nice.

**AU: Have you guys played many gigs and with
who? Anything coming up?**

Ray: We don't play a lot of gigs but we always
jump at the
chance if it's
something that
we're into. We
have played
some great
shows with our
American friends
Victory, Assault
and Battery,
Empire Down,
Ex Lex and
Virgin Whores.
We recently
played with The
Enforcers and
we're playing
later this month
with Chain Whip.

**AU: You guys
just put out
your first EP
in 2020 "Battalion," three banging heavy oi!
influenced tunes, anything else in the works?
And where can we find a copy?**

Ray: The "Battalion" 7" was a limited run of 250.
We still have a handful of copies available directly
from the band but they are mostly gone. We just
finished recording another four songs which
will be released in an undecided format in the
near future. Likely a couple tracks will be on
compilations and another 7"

AU: What are some other oi! Bands new/old

VOICE OF THE STREETS

from Winnipeg that we should know?

Ray: Newer oi! bands to watch out for from
Winnipeg would be 1916 and Pure Impact.

**AU: Any band members in any other bands?
Past and present.**

Ray: We have all played in punk, Oi! and Hardcore
bands for the last 20+ years. Some previous

projects are Dead
City Disease, The
Knockarounds,
Diefenbaker, and The
Crackdown.

**AU: You guys are
featured on a oi!
compilation Colossal
Chance on Working
Class Youth Records
and Distro with The
Franks , Squadron,
Burden and more,
how did this come
about? Where is
the label from? And
how can we get our
grubby hands on a
copy?**

Ray: This was just one
of those cool things
where someone

reached out to us from Portugal and asked us to
be a part of it. It's a great compilation. We don't
have any copies for sale but I hope to have some
available soon. In the meantime they should be
available directly from Working Class Youth.

**AU: Last but not least anything else you like to
mention? Shout outs?**

Ray: Thank you for the interview. I'd like to also
thank our brothers in the TCSP and WCSP.



The Midweek Mosh

08/2022



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EYEHATEGOD



ABSOLUTE METAL



EyeHateGod

Interview with Gary Mader - bass = PART THREE
...from home // in New Orleans // 70 minutes
on health, and perspective, appreciation // late
November 2021

(continued from issue #105 April/May 2022, and
#106 June/July 2022)

Absolute Underground: With the downtime
that you had. Did you find a new interest, or
hobby, or revisit something that was non-
musical?

GM: Yeah, I got I got heavily into gardening. Haha!

AU: What were you gardening? And why?

GM: From when we first started this whole mandatory break, I hadn't been home enough to make roots anywhere for three years. I moved three times and I hadn't been home for a second. And so one of the first things that I did, was start planting in my backyard. Almost like you would

paint a picture, but I was doing it with plants, and positioning them, and moving rocks, just to occupy my mind, my time.

Because I was going crazy. Just being stuck at home, dude. To be home this long, it drove me insane. So, I started to find a way to get away from it. I made it a ritual every morning to come out, to spend a couple hours. Trying

to make things look cool around me. It started to be this thing - where the cooler it looked in my backyard, the cooler it was in my mind! When there were weeds, when shit was knocked over from the hurricanes still, when it is a mess back here it is a pretty good guarantee that I wasn't all there in mind, going nuts from being home. Eventually, I got to this point where I focused on taking care of these plants, my tomato plants, and okra, some cacti and just pretty much a little bit of everything. And by diverting my attention from all these distractions, I learned how to take care of the land around me. Because one of the things that dropped into my head intuitively, throughout all this mess, is that eventually, maybe in the not so distant future, we might have to take care of ourselves. We might not be able to go to a store to get our fucking Lucky Charms, you might have to actually grow your own food. And I know that we're a stretch away from all that. But the first time around is always the best time to realize that

you can't do it. You will starve if you just tried to do this right away.

AU: Get started early, get up and running, right?

GM: You have to start somewhere. There's no shame in not knowing. It's shame in not wanting to know. I figured it would be a good thing to start, and get into, something that's practical, and therapeutic.

AU: Advice from you and the band on health habits, making peace, is relevant to hear. You guys have been resilient through your different challenges. Being from New Orleans with weather, and health challenges, touring, COVID - tips for resiliency are appreciated.

GM: You have to find your methods!

AU: Is there a physical place that you feel connected with the earth, or energy? If you've been in a place in your travels, could you tell us about it?

GM: I've been to like tons of places like that, where there's different energies present. Like old churches, pilgrimage sites, that people used to go in the 14th century. But the simple answer to it, really, is that the same energy that people seek when they make pilgrimages to Black Madonna statues, or any statue with a blessed sentient presence, that same feeling of connecting to something not in this dimension - you can find

out in the fucking woods, my dude.

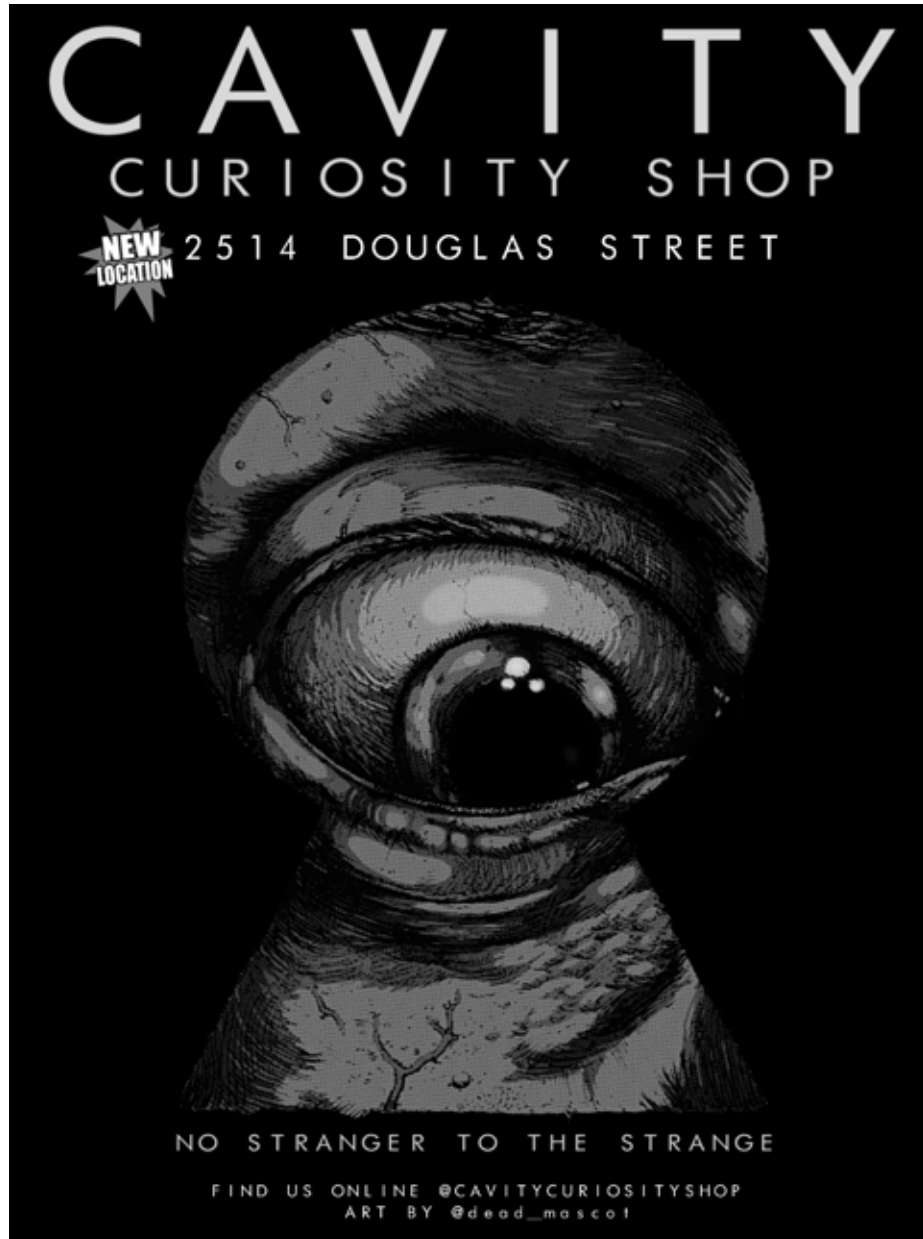
Any place where you're isolated. Far away from city life and businesses, and you can find someplace to exist. This is what I do on tour. I look around the hotel we're at, and usually within a couple of miles, you can find an area that's got nothing built there, only forest. Just go as deep as you can without getting lost. Until you can't hear anything but birds and the winds through the trees. Those places, are where you find yourself connected with something different. You could call it God. Whatever you want. A special feeling. But really, it's something that is blocked out in modern life, because of the way we live now in

cities. Traditionally, there was time for contemplation. Now we do things that get in the way of these messages, the way of harmony of living. That's the purpose of the city - to break it all up, and create a feeling of confusion. When you go into the woods, you get away from all that. Whatever happens, when you go and you spend a significant amount of time away from all the distractions, and go someplace where there's just trees around you, a lake, river or stream - any kind of isolation in nature. You reconnect. If

you're anxious, or want to hear birds sing, its a good place to go. Bury yourself in the woods somewhere - where all you hear is the tinnitus harmonizing with the song of birds! Hahaha.

If you don't have to time to breathe, you can't collect yourself right. They like to keep you stunned, the media, government - you have to actively seek out some peace...

// COVID downtime led to a new record and time to recharge. Gary and EHG are now found on the road again, spreading the end-time message //



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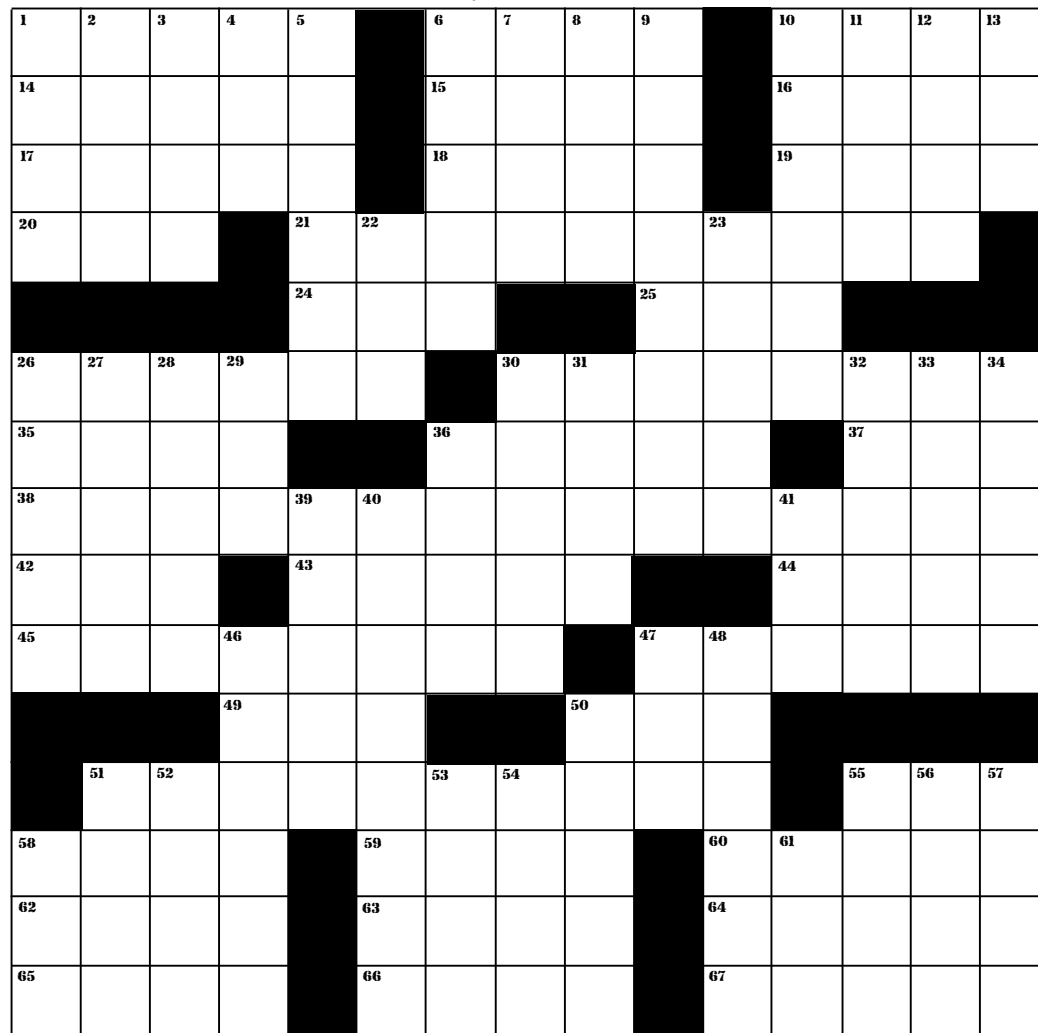
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ACROSS

1. Common Canadian trees
6. Unwanted email
10. Monty Python's "Upper class _____ of the year"
14. It might be played on radio
15. The new Kirk
16. Bugs Bunny, for example
17. Fill with gas
18. Copier
19. It's a great lake
20. Complete collection
21. Is promiscuous, according to an old expression
24. It's often full of ashes
25. Mark for Bo Derek
26. Lux and Ivy's band (with "The")
30. The _____ down (a difficult situation)
35. Bubbly chocolate treat
36. Monks or witches may do this
37. ____ test (try for a better mark)
38. Unable to change (with 'it')
42. Friend of Hélène
43. "What are you _____?"
44. Shock
45. "The Merry Widow" for example
47. "Book _____" by Confucius
49. US org. supporting artists
50. Co. in Cologne
51. Almost achievable
55. Jello's band: abbr.
58. He can be of the flies or of the rings, according to books
59. Dead
60. _____-up job (perform well)
62. He busted ghosts
63. Ogler
64. Seer's cards
65. Slammin' Sammy
66. Ice Cream brand
67. Worries about

DOWN

1. Zombie and Reiner
2. Reese's character in "Legally Blonde"
3. Kids' colourful markers
4. Korean auto company
5. Frames
6. Todd McFarlane's creation



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SUMMER, 2022

8. Once more
9. Deserving of
10. The Coyotes' Shane and family
11. Skin blemish
12. Purple plant
13. Concert souvenir
22. Vital hospital areas
23. Old Greek currency
26. Tree whose seeds form the basis of 35-across
27. Plug your guitar again?
28. Action hero, to his friends
29. It's the word in Québec
30. Bowie's "_____ Girl"
31. Word with around or glide
32. _____ less travelled
33. First word of an Eco-slogan
36. Marker
39. First words of a song in "The Sound of Music"
40. Completely destroyed
41. Canuck band covered by this puzzle's theme
46. The make-up of cells
47. Word with hash or motor
48. Horse's snack
50. Truckers (and others)
51. Forbidden (zone)
52. Greek God of Love
53. 2002 film Sisterhood
54. Paid (too much?) attention to
55. Truth or _____
56. The Saints "____ Your Product"
57. NCO's

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the TV Dead

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Larry, Scott, and Mark, we are the TV Dead

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

Larry and Scott played in a band previously Scott and Mark played in a different band previously eventually we joined forces and became the TV Dead.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Fast and Loud, the soundtrack to a 80s pool sk8 comp.

AU: Have you released an album recently?

Yes, we have. We recorded our new six-song EP called 'Last Place' produced by David James Brown @pretendengineermusic recorded at Cheeseburger Mountain Studio here in Ucluelet. You can expect to hear six punk rock songs on a 45 mph record.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

You just have to listen to the record backwards.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

1993 is about the Plan B video 'Virtual Reality' that still plays on VHS's everywhere. Another stand out track is 'At Least You Tried' that we made a video for and you can find on Wrecking Crew Records

YouTube page.

AU: What record label will this new album be released on?

Wrecking Crew Records out of eastern Canada even though we are on the west coast.

AU: What do you like best about working with

Wrecking Crew Records?

We get to do what we want and John is supportive we are stoked to be part of the Wrecking Crew family.

AU: How have you been surviving the Apocalypse? Any survival tips to share?

Grow your hair long, listen to Bob Marley, turn your sheets into pants, just blend in.

AU: Any shows or tours planned to promote new release?

We just had a record release party at the ANAF



WRECKING CREW RECORDS

293 here in Ukee on July 22 and have a bunch more shows planned for summer and fall.

AU: How would you sum of 2022?

Well the one thing I know for sure is that Sum 41 definitely sucks.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

We have a couple cassettes out, *Wheel Talk*

and *Vert Party* lots of random merch and some top secret stuff that will be declassified shortly.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Keep going to shows, support your local bands, support zines like *Absolute Underground*. Thanks for all the support we've had over the years.



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King Buffalo

Interview with drummer **Scott Donaldson**
By **Matt Norris**

Formed in 2013, this heavy psychedelic rock band are about to release their fifth full length album, *Regenerator*, on September 2nd.



With a major tour starting July 14th in Germany this band has been expanding and intriguing the musical mind with thought-provoking brilliance and talented performances start to finish with each massive release since forming. Live, the band is immense intense and dynamically imaginative, heavy, trippy, sedative and crushingly sonic.

King Buffalo is the trio of vocalist/guitarist Sean McVay, bassist Dan Reynolds, and drummer Scott Donaldson. Music styles are pure dynamic layers of emotionally charged well sculpted serious rock n roll and psychedelic dreamscapes, atmospheric and naturally heavy and 100% original.

Absolute Underground: When you are not touring where do guys call home? And what is the weirdest, strangest story you can remember about that place?

Scott Donaldson: We all live in Rochester, NY within about 10 minutes of each other. It's a pretty small city. There's not really a lot of weird or strange things that happen here, but one thing that's kind of funny is that David Bowie got arrested here for possession of marijuana in the 70s. He never performed here again.

AU: If your band was stuck on a desert island and could only listen to one other band's repertoire from any time throughout history, what bands would you pick, and why?

SD: Every one of us would have a different answer for this. For me it'd easily be Pink Floyd. They're my favourite band of all time and they have plenty of albums to choose from to keep things fresh while figuring out how to survive on this hypothetical desert island.

AU: What is the most inspiring thing you have witnessed lately in the world?

SD: Honestly things have felt pretty bleak and chaotic all over the world the past few years so finding inspirational things has been kind of rare and difficult. I try to just take notice of little things as they pass by.

AU: If Tony Iommi phoned you tomorrow and said he wanted to eat peyote and drink absinthe at a studio in Antarctica with your band, what would you do?

SD: Tony Iommi is an absolute legend. But with that said I would probably just be sad that I have neither the money nor the partying skills to be able to actually take him up in that offer.

AU: For any first time listeners to King Buffalo what songs would you tell them to look up on Youtube or Spotify to give them a first glance into the idea of your vastly dimensional musical onslaught?

SD: It's tough for me to try and pick out specific songs for this, but off the top of my head I'd recommend just starting off with "Repeater," "Longing To Be The Mountain," and "Silverfish," but I would probably change that answer depending on the tastes of the person asking it.

"Repeater" is about monotony and pushing through it. That song was written while I was working way too much at a crappy job where I felt I was wasting all my time and energy on pointless things that destroyed my body and didn't pay its workers nearly enough.

"LTBTM" is an aspirational song about trying to reach some peace and tranquility. Sort of finding one's place in the world.

"Silverfish" is about isolation and feeling like you're losing your mind.

AU: When on tour, what are your favourite cities for their local cuisines?

SD: I've had some incredible meals in way too many cities to list. I love trying new foods and whatever the local fare is in any particular spot. Some highlights as far as North America cities go would have to be Montreal and New Orleans though.

AU: You've toured with some amazing acts, name us a few of your favorite bands to party with on the road.

SD: We've been super lucky to get along with every band we've toured with. We're not huge party animals so there aren't a lot of crazy party stories, but we've always had a blast and came away with super solid friendships. The short list would have to be All Them Witches and Elder though. Our first tour ever as King Buffalo was with All Them Witches in 2013. We all piled into an RV together and toured around the US playing

to completely empty rooms pretty much every night. And Elder brought us along for our first ever European Tour. We love all those dudes.

AU: New album *Regenerator* coming out Sept 2nd, super excited, please give us a ride into the making of the album.

SD: I think we definitely took some big swings on this record and pushed ourselves in ways we hadn't before. I think long time fans of ours will certainly notice the quicker tempos, and different tonalities/sounds. We really wanted to make a record that kind of stood as sort of a counterbalance to *Burden*. I think we accomplished that and can't wait to get it out into the hands of our fans.

AU: What job would you have if you weren't here to rock our worlds and expand our thought processes?

SD: I went to school for sound recording technology and worked exclusively in audio production for a short time. It was incredibly difficult to make a living, and was even harder to pursue my own musical interests. I eventually switched to working manual labor jobs during the day so I could have nights free for rehearsing/gigging. I guess in a parallel universe I stayed working in audio. Or maybe I'm still working those manual labor jobs.

AU: What is behind the name King Buffalo?

SD: We get asked this a lot and unfortunately the answer is super boring. There's really nothing behind the name. We formed super quickly and needed a name in a hurry. We made a big list of names and took turns crossing names off it. We eventually settled in King Buffalo. We thought there could be some cool imagery there and just went with it, haha.

AU: Any last words? And thank you for the great riffs, King Buffalo!

SD: Nope, just thanks for reaching out and for the support!

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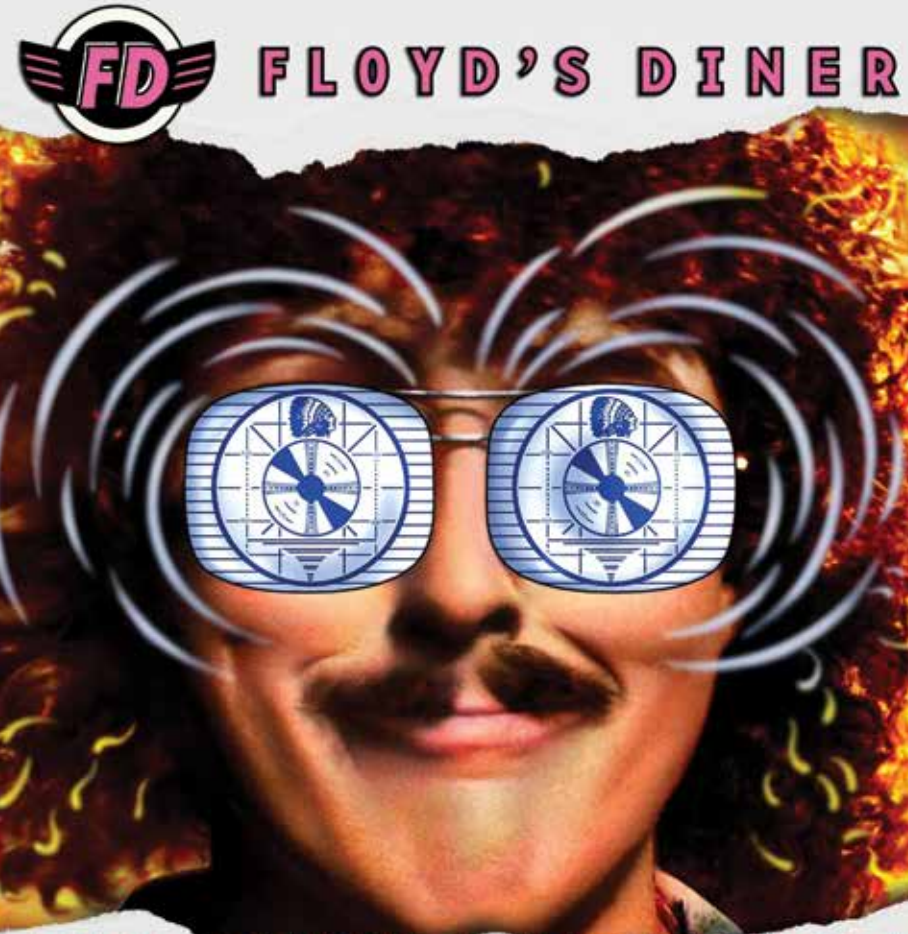
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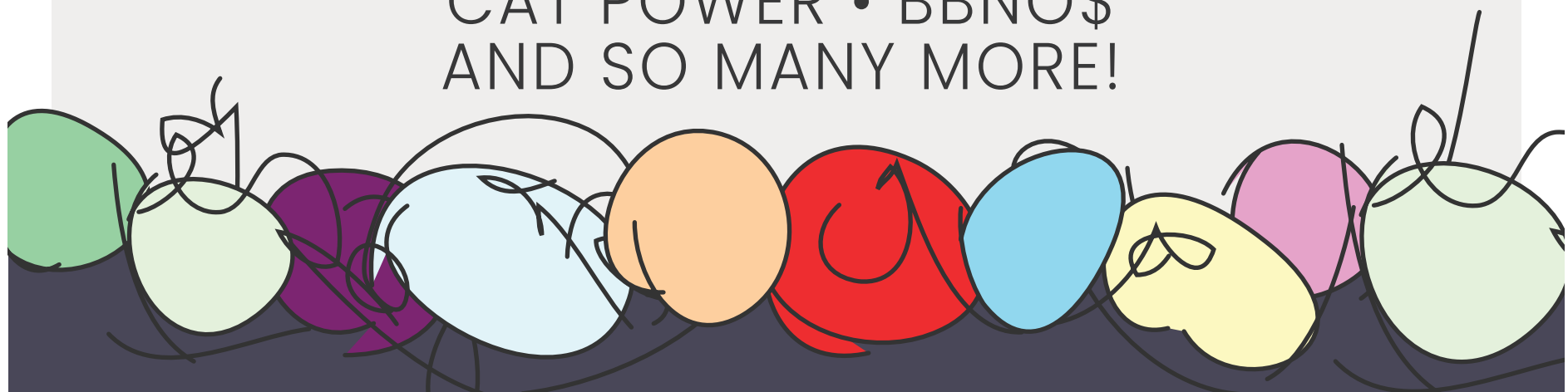
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Punk Rock Baseball

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

HF: You are talking to Heath Fenton. Mediocre vocalist, bush league journalist and baseball wizard.

AU: How did you first become involved with the sport of baseball?

HF: Just watching it as a kid at six years old and falling in love with Ozzie Smith. Then playing it by myself against a brick wall. Then eventually finding other kids to play it with. Then my American step dad Bo came into the picture and me and him put together a Jr Babe Ruth baseball team (13/14 year olds) with him as the coach and me and my friends as players. And we ended up winning the championship in our second year. I always loved playing it, but when Bo gave us the opportunity to play real games and taught us the intricacies of the game that is when I truly fell in love with the game. I grew up in the Kootenays, and let me tell you, it is not exactly a hotbed for baseball. But we made it happen.

AU: What is the name of your team and the league you play in? How many years have you been involved?

HF: Well it is sort of complex. Because I am in my 40s, there is not many teams or leagues around for someone like me to play real baseball. Once you hit your 20s and you aren't good enough to play college ball then you are pretty much relegated to playing softball for the rest of your life. Some are lucky and can hang on to a Sr. Mens baseball position. But that will soon fade as well. So I started the Ladysmith Punk Rock Baseball Club in March of this year. Punk Rock, meaning DIY renegade type baseball. My goal was to get enough people for two teams and have pick up games. I didn't quite meet those numbers but I did manage to get a team out of it with some of the regulars that have been showing up. That team is called the Stuart Channel Blue Heron and we have a roster of 15. We don't have a league, but we play other teams in one off friendly exhibition games around Vancouver Island. The Ladysmith Punk Rock Baseball Club still exists, and we still play pick up games. More and more

players are catching wind of this and by spring next year I will have at least another team so we can play locally against each other. And hopefully that will be the birth of a league here.

AU: What makes this particular baseball league unique in your opinion?

HF: Well, like I said, we are not a league, yet. So this year we are sort of like an unsigned band looking for gigs. Through the power of the internet I have formed a club, then a team, and now I have found other teams to play. But ultimately I would like to see a four team league locally in the Stuart Channel area (Duncan, Saltair, Crofton, Chemainus, Ladysmith). So far, all those who have come out are from those communities, plus we have a couple of guys from Nanaimo. And that would be unique because we would have the only old guy baseball league in the area.

AU: Who are some of the other teams in your league?

HF: The next team will be the Yellow Point Vultures. But that will be next year. For now we have been playing teams comprised of players from other leagues in Nanaimo, Port Alberni, and the Comox Valley. Nanaimo has a 6 team league. Pt. Alberni has a 4 team league. Comox Valley has an 8 team league. Those leagues have been very accommodating to us with getting teams together to play us so we can play actual games. They are encouraged by us because they want

to see more leagues on the island. And our region is missing. I figure if they can have old guy baseball leagues then why can't we. Out of those 3 regions we have the second highest population besides Nanaimo. There is a demand and hunger for this brand of baseball here.

AU: Is drinking allowed/encouraged?

HF: Definitely allowed, I don't know if encouraged is the right word. To each their own. Everybody is different in that aspect.

We play on a minor baseball field so we can't drink while playing on the field or in the dugout. But we have tailgaters in the parking lot and one of our sponsors is Bayview Brewing in Ladysmith so we go there to unwind after too. But basically yeah, in a nutshell, it is beer league baseball.

AU: Do you crank tunes during the games?

HF: We do not. We would love to get to the point where we could do walk up songs during games tho. And crank tunes between plays and innings. That is a definite goal.

AU: Does the punk rock baseball band The Isotopes play in this league as well?

HF: No they do not. But funny you should mention them, as they are a direct influence for what I am trying to achieve. Hence the Ladysmith "Punk Rock" Baseball Club moniker. I played for 5 years in the East Van Baseball League before I moved to the Island. Evan October from the Isotopes started the EVBL. It was him that rescued me from a boring life of playing softball when he asked me to join the EVBL when it started. That was an easy choice and I am forever grateful. Thanks to that league I enjoyed the most fun I have had playing any sort of ball in my life. And that includes when I was a child or youth. The EVBL was a real eye opener for me and rekindled my love for the game in its purest form. When I moved to Vancouver Island, I couldn't find



anything like it. So I decided to try and make something that I like and enjoy over here. And I am finding out I am not the only one that enjoys such things. There was no way I was going to go back to playing softball. It would have been easy to just join some slow pitch team when I moved here. But I have no interest in that at all thanks to all those guys and gals in the EVBL. I am done with fake baseball. Real baseball is where it is at. So I'll give a huge shout out to the EVBL and Evan and the Isotopes. They are huge supporters for what I am trying to do over here and even helped us out by donating most of the gear we have. Big props to Dave the EVBL commissioner over there in East Vancouver. They are cats I can lean on and seek guidance, because I witnessed them do it. They are the originators of punk rock baseball as far as I know. They have a website. Check their story out. Because that is the basic model and inspiration for this.

AU: Any other bands have teams?

HF: No bands. But we have a bunch of musicians and Duncan Music is one of our sponsors as well.

AU: What's the best thing about playing baseball?

HF: Just getting out there with friends playing a game you love. Getting your mind off things, enjoying the summer and having some laughs and a few drinks after. For me it is loads of fun. It is a magical game. It's not for everyone, but it is for some.

AU: Are you a fan of the John Fogerty song Centerfield?

HF: Of course. I can get behind anything John Fogerty does. That reminds me, I need to dig out my Creedence tapes.

AU: What's your batting average?

HF: Well, I pitch now. Lets just say I am a born again pitcher and my batting stats reflect that.

AU: How long is the season and when do the playoffs start?

HF: We'll be going all summer. No playoffs, as mentioned there is no league yet. But we do have five more games to go. There is a tournament in

the works. And we always do the pick up games on Mondays. Next year we will be taking it up a notch, now that I know this can be a thing here. I wasn't sure at first.

AU: Do you have a team mascot?

HF: So far I guess it is me. I am the mascot. We need to work on that.

AU: Anything else you want to mention or promote?

HF: Yeah. We need like minded people to come out and play. This started off as a pretty grass roots experiment that is turning out quite nicely and better than I ever expected. We have local sponcers and interest is gaining fast. But we need more players to jump on board. The more the merrier. We are super inclusive and we do it for the love of the game and we are all baseball enthusiasts. Maybe you haven't played since high school and miss the game? Maybe you are a woman who never had the opportunity to play baseball and have been stuck playing softball but would love to try baseball? Maybe you got cut from your college team when you were 19 and never went back but always wanted to play again? Maybe you might not be good enough anymore to make your Sr. Mens team? Or whatever! I think you get my drift. We'll take on all comers as long as they are familiar with the game and have a good attitude. We like to have fun, still play hard and put our best effort in no matter what our abilities may be. It's real baseball. And real baseball rules.

AU: How can people find out more info online if they want to get involved?

HF: There is nothing online as of now except a private Facebook group that is growing. Anybody who is interested and you want to get hooked up, they can get a hold of me. And please do. I am easily accessible. My email is vocalistheatfenton@gmail.com and you can call or text me at 236-333-6233. Or just find me on Facebook and send me a message. Heath Fenton. There aren't too many of us by that name.





Interview With a Cam-pire - The Regan Years

By Billy Hopeless

When I look at life I always try to think of the amazing creations and times I've been part of. I also am always amazed and applaud when I hear of others who have made dreams into reality or witnessed the magic that is so truly exciting, the energy is undeniable and contagious. My guest today was a fan of the band that led to me being a mutual fan of his art as a independent no budget gore-rilla filmmaker who's living the dream of creating beautiful nightmares. So gather round all you sick and twisted sex crazed blood hungry underground gore hounds and feast on the works of Liam Regan.

Billy Hopeless: Liam Regan this is your bloody life! In 2015 at a perfect age of 29 you unleashed your first full length massacre, *My Bloody Banjo*, which gained instant cult status and high praise from the horror community. Now 8 years later your new slasherpiece *Eating Miss Campbell* is premiering August 26th in London, England at the Prince Charles Cinema as part of FrightFest 2022! How does it feel?

Liam Regan: Time has flown by so fast since the release of *My Bloody Banjo*, I never thought I would make another movie again. You know, only 3% of British feature length filmmakers make a second movie, the industry is so against us, and nobody ever speaks about how corrupt sales agents and distributors can be. The only distributor that was honest with me was Troma Entertainment, they could have optioned *Banjo* at the get-go, but they knew what I needed to make back the self financed budget, and they couldn't promise me that. Instead, I went with another distributor, who broke so many promises, censored the film and



who else were your influences that led you to the trailers less travelled?

LR: My mum purchased an ex-rental VHS of *The Toxic Avenger Part 2* when I was only 11 years old, and since then, I was Tromaized and wanted to become a filmmaker. Without Lloyd Kaufman or Michael Herz, there would be no *My Bloody Banjo* or *Eating Miss Campbell*. So, to have my second feature length movie have that Troma Entertainment seal of approval means the entire world to me. Lloyd has become a friend and mentor over the years. Along with films by Frank Henenlotter (*Basket Case*), the satirical humour of Trey Parker and Matt Stone (*South Park*) and the slapstick British comedy of Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson (*The Young Ones* & *Bottom*) truly shaped my style of horror comedy.

BH: How was it different masking your first stab at filmmaking and the latest slain?

LR: We filmed *My Bloody Banjo* in the Summer of 2014, I was in my late twenties, extremely green and naive,

but the movie was released in the Summer of 2015, played worldwide at film festivals and gained rave reviews. However, the mistakes began the second I signed all my worldwide rights to a distributor, who didn't care to promote or market the film, instead *My Bloody Banjo* was just a small cog in the big distribution machine. I'm extremely happy to sign the American rights to Troma Entertainment and having Lloyd Kaufman onboard as a producer, whilst I'm distributing the movie in the UK with my own DIY punk Blu-ray boutique label with the vanity name of "Refuse Films" and I would love to distribute more films from like minded filmmakers, with transparency and honesty, what the big corporate dickheads don't realize, is if the filmmaker wins, we all win.

BH: Well, stir up the Campbells! Tell us the basic concept of where the idea to open up this

created generic artwork for the movie. So, it feels great! To paraphrase Freddy Krueger from *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4*: "You shouldn't have buried me (in expenses)... I'm not dead."

BH: I should also mention that E.M.C squared not only the honor of being a Troma film but produced by the toxic director himself Lloyd Kaufman! Did you have teenage Troma prior to this unholy union? and if so or not

HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU

whole can of film came from?

LR: I must have had a million different ideas after *My Bloody Banjo* was released, and I could never settle on an idea. Then, I realized all my friends were becoming vegan, and the idea of a vegan cannibal having the moral dilemma of eating human flesh was pretty funny. And, with *My Bloody Banjo* not being a commercial success, meant that I had to self finance again, but self financing means I have complete 100% creative control, meaning I was able to turn *Eating Miss Campbell* into a partial/spiritual sequel to *My Bloody Banjo*, bringing back some of the *Banjo* characters and placing them into this new story, which takes place post-*Banjo*. I grew up watching Kevin Smith movies too, and I always loved how he created his mini movie universe, where characters come and go. I would love to explore the "Banjoverse" more.

BH: As a writer, I love dirty filthy forbidden written words. So what's your favourite line of dialogue from the unholy scriptures of *Eating Miss Campbell*?

LR: "Sandy Hook ain't got shit on us!" or "9/11 is a national holiday for our people..."

BH: With my passion for movies of this depravity I've often found myself saying it was on mark but missed the mandatory gratuitous tit shot. Do we get Nudity in this film or is it a Disney minus production?

LR: With *My Bloody Banjo*, I made a point of showing only penis, turning the horror genre convention upside down. However, I'm happy to confirm that *Eating Miss Campbell* has "gratuitous tit shot(s)" - that's right, plural!

BH: Speaking of dangerous curves, tell us about the leading ladies. How did you find these sirens of the silver scream?

LR: One of the hardest casting choices was for the title character Miss Campbell, played by first timer Lala Barlow. I was browsing casting websites and saw this quirky looking live action cartoon character, and I knew I had to cast her as Miss Campbell. Unfortunately for me, it turned out that our Miss Campbell (Lala Barlow) resided over the other side of the world, in Australia! So I decided to put another "shrimp on the barbie" and take a chance, I flew her over to South Yorkshire, England. And the rest is history!

BH: Though horror movies are always a regular spot in this rag, the main satin has always been music. How did you get Joe Renzetti of *Child's Play*, *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, and my personal fave *The Buddy Holly Story* to create your film score? Who else is on the soundtrack?

BH: *Child's Play* is my all-time favourite horror movie franchise, so you could say Joe Renzetti was the soundtrack of my childhood, I must have watched the first *Child's Play* over 100 times. It's perfect in every way, so when the opportunity arose through a mutual friend, Justin A. Martell (Joe Bob Briggs' *The Last Drive-In*) who has distributed Joe's soundtracks for *Basket Case 2* and

Frankenhooker via the record label Ship to Shore Phono Co., so it was a match made in heaven when Justin asked if I would like Joe to compose the score. Joe's score is a masterpiece, and I can't wait for people to hear it! We also have many amazing artists with brand spanking new songs



in the movie, I grew up in the era of 00s punk rock, pop punk and nu-metal, so to have artists like The Black Halos, Wheatus and Twiztid on the soundtrack is such an incredible feeling! We also have some amazing independent British bands like Unquiet Dead, Hands off Gretel, Die So Fluid, Lesbian Bed Death and many more.

BH: You know I really only asked that question for self promotion and cause I've had a real teenage boner in my heart ever since you asked us to give you a song for the soundtrack. Speaking of self-promotion and selling your body of works, you successfully crowd funded the money to finish the post production with all kinds of burning offerings like DVDs and Blu-rays, vinyl and even credits in the film. Do you still have any *Eating Merch Campbell* and if so where can our readers purchase the trash treasures?

LR: We will have an online store over at refusefilms.com opening November 2022, so keep your eyes and wallets peeled!

BH: Well, Cheers to you and know this... you've lived dreams more incredible than most of the Joe job slouches on this planet. I urge all who read this to demand their local independent movie houses to serve *Eating Miss Campbell*. Now before we end this interview with a Cam-pire I need you to help settle an argument for me like a true Yorkshireman. As a child of direct Yorkshire lineage I was always told that the proper way to make a right Yorkshire pudding is to use the drippings from the Roast Beast to make it rise proper and then serve it with the cooked flesh. Tell me is this truth or was it just another brick in the wall?

LR: Using "dripping" from roast beef is the only TRUE way to make Yorkshire pudding, it's our dirty little secret!

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This Is GWAR

Interview with documentary director Scott Barber

By Ira "Bohab" Hunter and Jared "Sick of You" Amos

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Scott Barber: My name is Scott Barber. I'm not famous at all but I guess I'm most known for directing *This Is GWAR*, which is currently on Shudder and AMC+.

AU: GWAR is actually the band that has been featured the most in the magazine since we began in 2004. GWAR has been on the cover the most times. So this is another another great opportunity to get GWAR on the cover. It makes sense that This is GWAR would be on Shudder. Was it your first choice?

SB: One of our producers, Josh Goldbloom has a great relationship with them. He showed them the rough cut of the movie and before we were even really thinking of selling it he said Shudder wants it. They were into treating filmmakers well but they also wanted to develop a relationship with GWAR and that seems like a match made in heaven. I would love to see more GWAR stuff, and I know that they're talking and

I hope something really cool happens. Shudder has done nothing but really good things for us. Getting our name out there and promoting us. We didn't want this to be niche. We never thought this was just a rock and roll doc or a horror doc. Shudder proved that they are going to get it out there to more than just horror fans. They're really getting us out there everywhere and they're supporting us in ways that I just never thought I would see a distributor do.

AU: What was the genesis of doing this documentary on GWAR?



SB: I kind of keep a tally of different things that I think would be a cool idea for a documentary. GWAR was one of those. Because I knew about them but not a lot. I'm really into rock & roll, punk and metal. Everybody knows who GWAR is. Everybody knows the big points of GWAR. So I thought they would make a cool idea for a doc. Then my friend Roky Moon, he's in a band called American Sharks, toured with GWAR and he ended up having Thanksgiving at one of their houses. The idea of Thanksgiving at GWAR's house seemed so surreal to me. I said, Okay, I've got to do this and so I started researching them and reading the book *Let There Be GWAR*. That's when I really found out it would be an important story.

AU: What was your initial contact with GWAR, had you seen them live before?

SB: I had yes. I was fairly familiar with them. I just wasn't what they would call a hardcore Bohab. I couldn't tell you every single record, I couldn't tell you all the band members past, present, and future names. GWAR just didn't do a lot of interviews out of character for the longest time. When we were starting the documentary they were just starting to do that. So I just didn't know much about the people behind the mask, because I just had never seen them and there wasn't a lot of information about them out there. When I first had the idea of oh that would be cool just because of the visuals and the craziness. The documentary that popped into my head when I very first had the idea and then the documentary that happened are night and day different.

AU: Who are some of the celebrity talking heads featured in the film?

SB: We've got some good ones. I think that it really speaks to the legacy of GWAR the type of people we got to be in it. We've got Ethan Embry, we knew we had to get him. He plays Marc in *Empire Records*, the character that gets eaten on stage by the World Maggot at a GWAR concert. He eats a pot brownie while he's watching a GWAR video and imagines that he's on stage and gets eaten. That's how a lot of people know GWAR. We've got Thomas Lennon from *Reno 911*. Alex Winter from *Bill & Ted's*, who is also a fantastic documentarian.

We've got "Weird Al" Yankovic. That's probably the craziest one. He's something bigger than a celebrity, he's like a legend. Then we've got a lot of high profile metal musicians like Kyle Shutt from The Sword and Randy Blythe from Lamb of God.

AU: Is there a Director's Cut planned or was there a bunch of deleted footage that might make it on a Blu-ray release one day?

SB: There is a Blu-ray and DVD that's going to come out around October. Shudder is going to put that out and it will certainly have a bunch of



extra things that weren't in the doc. There's like 12 or 13 different people that are in GWAR that were interviewed so there's a lot of stuff that they said that didn't make it in. There's certainly things that happened in GWAR's career that weren't in the doc. The documentary is long. An hour and fifty minutes was the shortest we could make it. Even then, there are things that just didn't make it in. We had to kind of tell a story, make people fall in love with GWAR. But there are little twists and turns that didn't make it in there. We're hoping that we could get a director's cut that is three or



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AU: How were you able to depict these interstellar monster characters from the band as human beings?

SB: That was one thing that we wanted to show. I mean at the end of the day these are people. If we made them seem like gods, which they play on stage, you actually wouldn't relate to them. The reason you relate to people and the reason you look up to people is not because they're perfect. It's because they are people and they do the best they can and they do amazing things, despite not being perfect. That's how we wanted to paint these people. We didn't want anybody to look like the villain. We wanted you to see it from different people's point of view. Different people will tell the same story different ways and it's kind of up to the viewer to decide what they believe. So we didn't want to paint anybody as the villain. In particular Dave Brockie is a special case, because he's not here to give his side. Fortunately, so many people were willing to kind of give his side for him because he had a lot of great friends who respected him. The one thing that we really wanted to

four hours long. Because we could certainly fill it up. People say how can you do that much about a band? But they're not a band. GWAR made two movies as well and there's so many people

involved. We're telling the story of filmmakers and artists and a band and people who have suffered great tragedy. do, we weren't trying to play up the drama or be salacious or anything like that. But the fact that Dave Brockie and Hunter Jackson couldn't get along is a huge part of the story because it's such a tragedy. Outside of the deaths, that's what I think is maybe the main tragedy. Those guys are like Paul and John. They're two amazing talents. Hunter was a filmmaker. Dave was an incredible musician. Hunter's movie and Dave's band came together and made GWAR. They're both alpha male talented geniuses and had they been able to work together saying you do the music, I'll do the costumes and we'll do this together. Who knows what they



could have done? So I think the fact that they weren't able to get along and be that Paul and John, I think it's a real tragedy. Somebody like Rob Zombie, I think is a perfect example. He's a musician who also does art. Why couldn't GWAR be where Rob Zombie is? They're just as good in every way.

AU: What would your name be if you were a member of GWAR?

SB: Probably Loserus Maximoto because I'm such a loser compared to those guys. So yeah, I would be their little loser buddy. Or I'd be one of the slaves.



AU: They tell the story in the film about how the original Cuttlefish of Cthulhu was confiscated. Has anyone ever recovered the original cuttlefish?

SB: No, and as far as they know it's still in an evidence room in Charlotte, North Carolina. I would like to believe that maybe somebody took it home and still has it. That could be a documentary right there, searching for the cuttlefish.

AU: How many GWAR concerts did you attend to get the footage for the film?

SB: About six.

AU: Who were some of the celebrities they were murdering on stage at that time?





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SB: Trump. That was the big one. That's one thing that I think is so funny, people would go "Oh my God, I'm so sick of these musicians getting political," when they would show them doing that. But GWAR has murdered every president since Ronald Reagan. They smash and kill everybody. Pop stars, rock stars, presidents, and anything in between.

AU: Yeah, they're definitely equal opportunity murderers. I've also seen them rip Obama's face off and tear Hilary Clinton's tits off. .

SB: Right yeah, totally.

AU: You also directed a documentary called *The Orange Years: The Nickelodeon Story*. What's next on the horizon for you?



SB: I'm trying to figure that out. I'm trying to take my time. The same trip that we debuted the Nickelodeon documentary at DOC NYC, I was already filming for GWAR. So before the Nickelodeon movie had even sold, it was just premiering at its first film festival, I was filming GWAR and I kind of regret doing that. Because I think you've got to see it through. You've got to enjoy it, take your victory lap, but also help promote it and not be torn in a

million different directions. We had a really great festival run with This is GWAR. I'm kind of mapping out what would be another great project. I've had such a fun time doing these documentaries with no corporate overlord. Getting to just make cool movies with my friends. I did some of the music on GWAR. I shot some of it. We all kind of got to get together and kind of build this thing all by ourselves and that was really fun. So I hope that I can find that middle ground of pitching an idea to somebody and having that support but still being able to not have a corporate overlord and just still get to make movies with my friends. Because that's really where my heart is more than making money.

AU: What were you most surprised to learn about GWAR?

SB: I was really surprised to learn just how amazing of people that they are. I knew that they were fantastic musicians. I knew that they were fantastic artists. I knew that they worked harder than anybody else. But I didn't know who they were and it wasn't until I met them that I said, these are just amazing people. I didn't know how much I would fall in love with all of them as people. I respect them not just as musicians but as people. I didn't expect them to be so open and honest and raw in their interviews and that's what makes the documentary. You don't expect to go to the emotional places that the documentary goes. It's the life that they lived and them being willing to go there because it's not fake. You can look at the emotion in their eyes. There's no way you can fake that.

AU: Were you at the GWAR B-Q where they had the Viking burial ceremony for Oderus?

SB: I was not, no. That happened before we started the documentary. We started about three years later shortly after *The Blood of Gods*, their first record without Dave came out. They did a memorial for Dave Brockie five years after he passed and I was at that. That was a truly amazing experience. His body is not there because they don't have access to it but the GWAR guys really wanted somewhere where their fans and them could grieve. There's something therapeutic about going to a grave site and talking to somebody, just somewhere



you can go and they didn't have that. So in the Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond Virginia there is now a gravestone with a really cool etching of Dave Brockie. Fans can go there to pay their respects and the band can go there and pay their respect. That was really special to get to be at that.

AU: I've seen about 20 different GWAR shows and they all tell a continuing story. After Dave Brockie passed away, they had a storyline that Mr. Perfect had murdered Oderus and it was kind of cathartic that way as well for the fans, that the storyline continued and that the band continued.

SB: Yeah, and on that record that tells that story. I love how GWAR can be serious and funny at the same time. That was another thing, I think I kind of noticed how many hidden messages there are

in their songs. On that record, *The Blood of Gods*, there's the song, "Fuck This Place" and there's the there's the line, "Oderus you left us." The first stage of grief is denial and lashing out and to me that's almost what that song sounds like. They're talking about how they're stranded here on Earth without Oderus and they're so angry about it. To me, it's maybe that first stage of grief when you're just angry. It's no secret that their song "Phantom Limb" is about him where they say, I can feel you like a phantom limb. I liked how they in that album and in that stage show they



were able to deal with something kind of heavy but in their usual GWAR way.

AU: I hung out and interviewed Cory Smoot a.k.a. Flattus Maximus and like you say in the movie he was such a nice guy, and really funny.

SB: That was a tough one for us in the documentary. The analogy that I've used before, it's not a spoiler that Dave Brockie dies. I would assume that most people that watch the documentary know that. Even people that aren't hardcore Bohabs, if you're just into rock and roll you know that. It's also obvious because he's not in the movie and everyone refers to him in the past tense. But I think that you are bracing for that towards the end. When the movie gets about halfway over you're like, I know it's coming and that's kind of like an emotional jab. Your eye is on the right hand that you know is coming and you're trying to get away from it and then the boxer smacks you with his left hand. You're bracing for Dave and then Cory's passing hits you. There's some other emotional gut punches that happen that I think people don't expect. Cory was a tough one. To

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edit that in a way that made sense that felt like we were paying homage to him. While also not taking away from Dave's death that is going to happen

later. With Cory being such a nice guy we scoured everywhere for pictures and video of him and couldn't find them. Of course with Dave Brockie there's no shortage of interviews and photos and him being silly. So the audience can get a feel for who Dave is, even without him being interviewed. Certainly, Cory was not the same.

We couldn't find any pictures of him, because he was such a modest guy that didn't need the spotlight. So we were kind of like, how do we make people fall in love with this guy? Also it was later in their career so GWAR weren't filming and taking pictures as much. In the early days when they were like 20 and they were doing *Beavis and Butthead* and *Jerry Springer* and all that they were filming all the time. We've got a treasure trove of archive footage. So with Corey, there just wasn't anything. We were able to find one or two clips that I think make you go, oh I know who that guy is. Yeah the guy that is just glad to be there. I think his presence is such a refreshing thing in the doc, at least to me. Because you've got all these egos and people fighting for dominance and wanting their share of the spotlight. Then you've got this guy come in like, I don't care, whatever and he's one of the most talented dudes ever. He wrote so much, he recorded so much, he really was a genius. He just had no desire to be in the spotlight or to have people say he's the best. So that was just difficult because we loved Cory and to give him justice there's just not a lot of footage of him out there. So we used sound bites from the other people and we were able to find one or two interview clips of him just being awesome.

AU: Any advice for aspiring documentary filmmakers?

SB: I would say just start, just do it. There's nothing that can stop you. We made this with really no money. I've certainly had people reach out to me

and say that they think the GWAR documentary should have done this or we should have focused on this. I always say, well then make that documentary, you can do it. The first step is the hardest. Just suck it up and go film some interviews. You've just got to start somewhere, just do something cool and other people will want

to come along and be part of it.

AU: Anything else to mention?

SB: One thing I would just like to say is about GWAR being one of the hardest working bands. I mentioned I filmed six shows and just trying to keep up with them for six shows was difficult. We did about four or five shows consecutively with them and it was insane. They're such hard working people. I knew that by what I saw. On this last tour there was a show where their bass player got Covid and he was out immediately. They didn't cancel one show. Their guitar player just strapped on a bass the next day. So the other guitar player had to play both guitar parts while the rhythm guitar player

played bass. It's crazy that they do that. Then there was another show where their singer got Covid. So what do you do? How can you replace that? Well, their guitar player just sang all the songs. He learned them overnight and they didn't miss one show. I don't know another band that would do that, cancel no shows. I'd also just like to say This is GWAR is on Shudder right now and if you use the code THISISGWAR you get a 14 day free trial instead of just 7 days. It's also on AMC+ if that's your thing. We're looking to put it on iTunes

and Amazon and we also have a Blu-ray/DVD release planned for this fall.

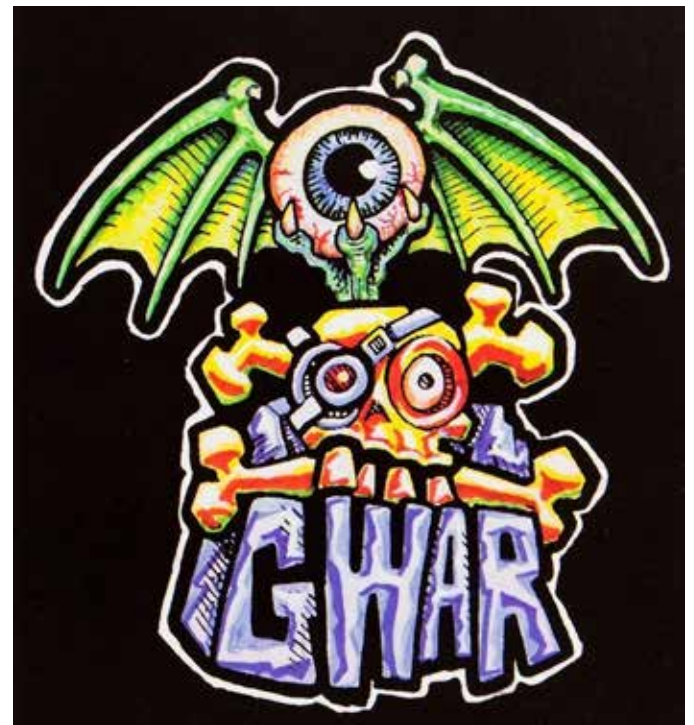
AU: When you were talking about GWAR working with Shudder, I was imagining a GWAR animated series?

SB: I would love to be a part of that. I would love to see GWAR on The Last Drive-In with Joe Bob Briggs. To me an animated GWAR show is a no brainer. There's a pilot out there that somebody made called The Animated Tales of GWAR. It has Weird Al in it. GWAR also already has movies that they've made, *Skulhedface* and *Phallus in Wonderland*. Also their concert movies like *Live from Antarctica*. In the documentary we show parts of *Skulhedface* and *Phallus in Wonderland*. *Phallus in Wonderland* was nominated for a Grammy. So I think it would be awesome for you to watch the documentary and then watch some of the movies GWAR created right afterwards.

AU: So GWAR is in Empire Records, what other Hollywood movies feature GWAR?

SB: There was one called *Mystery Date* starring Ethan Hawke. I'm noticing now there's a lot of shows where you starting to see GWAR shirts and posters. The show *Young Rock*, somebody had a GWAR shirt on in it. They just did a new show on Netflix, I think it's a *Resident Evil*, one of the zombies has a GWAR shirt on. There's a show on Netflix called *Metal Lords* about some kids in a metal band, somebody had a GWAR shirt on in there. But GWAR were also on *Beavis and Butthead* which was on MTV. They were in a Sega game, the *Beavis and Butthead* game was all about going to a GWAR concert. They were on every talk show Joan Rivers, Jerry Springer, all sorts of stuff.

AU: I noticed you had horror director Adam Green in the documentary. On his show



Holliston, Oderus played his imaginary monster in the closet. Which wasn't really mentioned in the documentary.

SB: We were so lucky to get Adam Green. There's so much stuff that we didn't go into. But there's such heavy stuff that happens at the end of the documentary that it was difficult for us. If you get the free 14 day trial for Shudder watch Holliston. It's got Oderus in it and it's a really good show.

AU: Any final words for Canadian Bohabs?

SB: Anybody I know from Canada has such good taste in metal and is so knowledgeable about metal. So I would just say, I hope that you like this documentary, because Canadian metalheads know what they're talking about. They should also do a GWAR poutine with like red chunks in it.

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Buzzcocks

Sonics In The Soul

Interview with Steve Diggle (vocals & guitar)
by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

SD: I'm Steve Diggle and I'm probably most famous for being in the Buzzcocks and for writing songs like "Harmony in My Head." We also had one called "Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)." I'm known for starting out around the same time as the Sex Pistols and The Clash,

with the Buzzcocks.

AU: Where did you grow up and how did you first get exposed to punk rock?

SD: I grew up in Manchester and we kind of created the original Manchester scene. We actually brought the Sex Pistols to Manchester for a show. So we opened up for the Sex Pistols. All the press came down to review the Sex Pistols and was blown away by this band called the Buzzcocks. That kind of put us on the map really. We saw the reviews in all the music papers at the time. So we were quite influential in creating the punk rock scene in Britain and around the world really.

AU: What is the history of the Buzzcocks?

SD: We started the band back in 1976. We made

really kind of the first independent record in the punk scene called "Spiral Scratch". We made that for £500 and that inspired a lot of people to make their own records. It was a unique sound and it was the beginning of the Buzzcocks sound of punk rock. Punk wasn't heard of then. I mean, there was just the Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Jam, The Damned, and Buzzcocks, those five bands in 1976 in Britain, there was no other punk bands. All the other bands came up later. So we were very much influential in creating what became punk rock.

AU: How would you describe the Buzzcocks sound for people that aren't familiar?

SD: It's got two distorted chainsaw kind of guitars, great riffs, great melodies, existential type lyrics in a rock and roll sense. It's a really unique sound. When we met the Ramones, they said they loved the Buzzcocks. We took the sound somewhere else. They only did like linear songs. We added angular bits and other things to it. So the Buzzcocks sound has influenced lots of people. People like Green Day, even R.E.M. and U2. So many bands cite the Buzzcocks as an influence before they started. But it's a very unique sound with catchy melodies, and the heavy distorted guitars, and great riffs, it's all there. Classic.

AU: You mentioned the Ramones, did you see them early on?

SD: No. When we started, they had just put out their first album in America. They were in New York. I don't think that they'd been to the England yet. We heard that, but we were writing our own songs. So it was a slight influence at the beginning. Like wow, that first Ramones album was amazing. So obviously we took that on board, but we had our own unique sound. But I'd say the Ramones inspired us a little bit and we took it to other places.

AU: What does the name the Buzzcocks mean? Is it some type of bird?

SD: Well some people think, is it a bird? or some kind of sexual device? Actually there was a TV program in the 70s called *Rock Follies* about three girls trying to make it in the music business. Up north in England, Cock kind of means like pal or mate or buddy. I think they mentioned that in the program. There was a review of this program and the TV reviewer had said *Rock Follies* is on tonight so have a good buzz hyphen cocks. So we joined the words together Buzzcocks. It's just a reviewer saying enjoy the show. By naming something gives it a definition. We've given it the definition. It means us.

AU: Singles Going Steady is a true classic album. Was that all of your your seven inch records put onto one LP?

SD: Yeah, I think most of them at that time. All of the songs on there we had as hits over here in Britain where we were doing the *Top of the Pops* TV show, touring, and all that stuff. It was two years before we could get to America though. We'd done our first album over here called *Another Music in a Different Kitchen*. But going to American that hadn't been released yet because we had not toured there. So the idea was to put all the singles on one album and bring America up to date and it became a kind of classic album in it's own right. In the States I think it's still known as our first album.

AU: What can you tell us about the new Buzzcocks record Sonics In The Soul?

SD: So, Pete Shelley died and we did a memorial gig at the Royal Albert Hall for him and then it was like we had some other shows booked so we carried on. We did about 11

PURE PUNK

shows and it was all going well. We had a single called "Gotta Get Better," with "Destination Zero" on the B-Side to run with the tour. Then COVID hit and that's when I wrote *Sonics in the Soul*. So I thought why not try to move the Buzzcocks on a bit and take some of the elements from the past so people still know it's the Buzzcocks but it's a new album. In some ways it's kind of like a bridge album to go some other places with this Buzzcocks sound. I tried to make it like in pre-punk early 70s when they made proper albums.

AU: Did you work with Pete Shelley on any of the songs before his passing?



SD: No, it was all brand new started from scratch. The song "Senses Out of Control" that came to me halfway through the album even though it's the opening track. I remembered the early days when we did *Spiral Scratch* and I thought we need one a bit like that. So I got a bit nostalgic about our first rehearsal I had like a little memory rush when that came in. Then the second song

"Manchester Rain" was from before the lockdown when I was in Manchester. We were doing this show and I was at the stage door. I signed some singles for these young kids and they said we're forming a band. I looked at them and I thought forty years ago or more I was like them. Looking for your hopes and dreams and that. There is another song called "Bad Dreams," which I think is a bit hypnotic. It's like holding a mirror up to the listener. There are other songs on there like "Don't Mess With My Brain," about government control which was directly COVID influenced.

AU: So the new record is coming out September 23rd on Cherry Red Records.

SD: That's right. They also put out a box set collection of our last three albums. Also a great demo album that we'd found that had some different tracks we never used in the studio. Plus we are really pleased Chery Red is putting out our new material with *Sonics In The Soul*, because it is us moving on a bit I think. It takes the Buzzcocks to another place now.

AU: Is there a specific story or person behind the song "Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've)"?



SD: Well, there is and there isn't. I think there was somebody Pete knew that he was in love with so there's a little bit of that there but I think generally it's universal as well.

AU: When the song "Orgasm Addict" first came out was there any controversy with that song?

SD: Yes, it caused a lot a trouble. When that record *Orgasm Addict* went to press, the pressing plant went on strike and said "We're

not printing this filth. Orgasm Addict? What the fuck?" They were shocked. So the release date was put back three weeks while the record label negotiated with the pressing plant. They said "Look, this is an artistic statement." So there was a lot of controversy around that single, yeah. But that was the thing with punk rock at the time, it opened peoples minds, it made you rethink what music was doing and it made it exciting.

AU: Do you think Buzzcocks will be coming to Canada to tour anytime soon?

SD: I hope so yeah, because pre-Covid we had a West Coast tour booked. So I'm sure we will.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans.

SD: We will be seeing you soon and get some *Sonics In Your Soul*.

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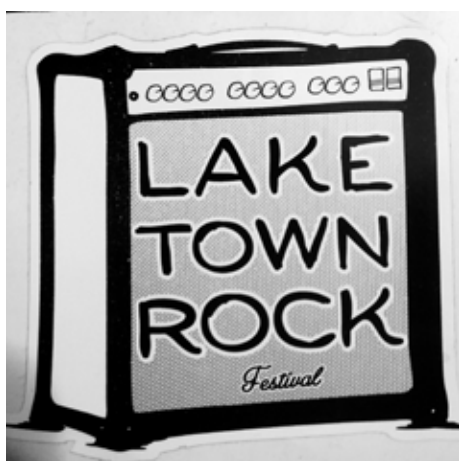


Laketown Rock - John Fogerty Live Review July 23rd, 2022 - Lake Cowichan, B.C.

Hi folks, welcome to my Laketown Rock Festival review.

Laketown Rock is a festival located at the Laketown Ranch site in Youbou in the Cowichan Lake area of Vancouver Island, B.C. It's a beautiful, pristine location indeed. A fellow named Greg Adams, a man who had acquired about 240 acres in the Lake Cowichan area had a vision for a festival site. He also claims his dream is to bring The Rolling Stones to the venue. Maybe in 2023, eh? This location is a camping concert goes dream come true.

Ok, Let's get on to Laketown Rock 2022 featuring John Fogerty alive and in concert. Everyone is ready for the big event. I stand side stage awaiting John Fogerty and his incredible 8 piece band. John wore his traditional blue plaid checked shirt with blue jeans and cool shoes. Guitar and pick in hand all ready to rock us into the twilight. Let's go through the setlist shall we?



The band opened with "Up Around The Bend" a high energized CCR classic that made my heart beat along to the groove. Next was "Green River" followed by the swampy sound of "Born on a Bayou". The next one has a lyric that John claims is the goal in life is "To make it to the bell" and that song is "Rock and Roll Girl" which featured a show stopping saxophone solo too.

Then John took to the microphone to tell the tale of his Rickenbacker guitar, a very special guitar in a few ways. He himself got the guitar in the 60s and modified it himself by installing a 'Les Paul invented Humbucker pickup. This pickup was invented for the Les Paul guitar in fact yet when John put one in his Rickenbacker guitar it made that wild screaming R'nR sound that his idols

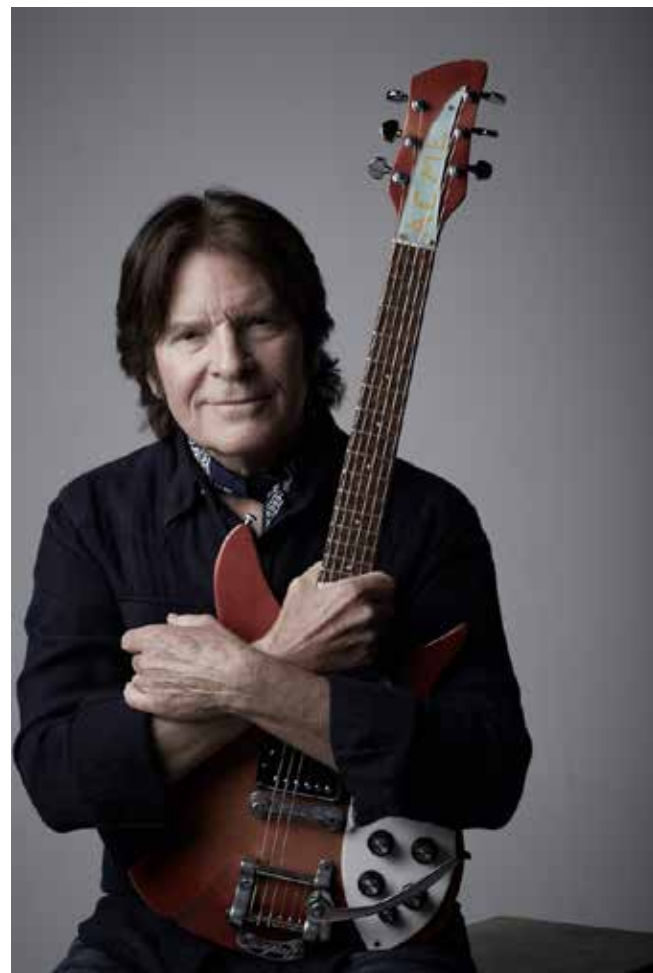
of Jeff Beck, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page and Eric Clapton all had. Now he had one and was able to make that guitar sing and recorded so many Creedence Clearwater Revival classics on it. This was the actual guitar that he played at Woodstock in 1969. At Woodstock it poured down rain during the festival. In fact, the morning after that festival when he awoke he picked up that guitar

and instantly wrote "Who'll Stop The Rain" which he then played for us all. What a thrill to hear it too. Shivers! Next was "Looking Out My Back Door" a classic that made me start to dance my happy dance. "Doodoodoo". John then announced that 3 of the members of his band were in fact his children; Shane, Tyler, and Kelsy. They are all stellar musicians as well.

"Heard it Through the Grapevine" was next with a keyboard solo that knocked it outta the park. "Run Through The Jungle" was next and then a deep down southern style "New Orleans" which morphed into "Good Golly Miss Molly" by Little Richard and was sung by his son Tyler who kinda stole the show with his super stoked performance. Now came the guitar solo from John, an epic reminder of the feedback felt in the 60s and the sound shook my bone marrow to the core. John also played a tribute to Eddie Van Halen when he tapped out his slower and soulful version of "Eruption". The next was a song I truly adored called "Keep On Chooglin'" from CCR's 2nd LP *Bayou Country* from 1969. Keeping up the momentum John continued to lay out the classics that we all came to enjoy. "Have You Ever Seen The Rain?" played like a memory turned into a living dream. Then came a special track called "Centrefield", the song played to classic b/w films of World Series baseball and let it be known that John is the only musician to ever be inducted into the Baseball Hall Of Fame. Let's not forget to mention John is also inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as well.

Hail Hail John Fogerty and Laketown Rock!

What a great show this was turning into. Next was "Travelling Band" and then the 80's classic "The Old Man Down The Road". And what could be as good was hearing "Fortunate Son" played next with reminders of war time films on the screen



during the Vietnam War to make us realize how lucky we are to be here in a crowd that's not at war, but only at peace in the comfort of a safe festival.

Now for the encore... 2 songs to end this great festival. "Bad Moon Rising" was as fresh as it was the day I first heard it. Which brings us to the last number "Proud Mary" was the final song performed and what a great version too!

A good night for all and at that I'll bid y'all farewell.

Until next review... 'Rock Out and Roll On' Peace and Love

- Clarko Supermantei

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BACKSTAGE PASS - VENUE PROFILE

Over the Hat

Spotlight on venue: Time and Space Continuum/
Cowichan Valley

Absolute Underground: Who am I speaking to and what is Time and Space Continuum?

Ky: My name is Kyren Teufel, I am manager and a co-creator of Time and Space, which is a currently a private, non-profit, art/music collective. We have 10 rooms and run three performance stages within and host many shared spaces. We do events of all sorts.

AU: When did this all get started?

Ky: Back in late 2018, I had to move from my previous venue downtown Duncan. My friend Mika Huhtanen was running this space on his own for a while, doing occasional events. He was fond of the sort of gatherings I had been putting together since 2014, and so he invited me over to share the space with him, which at the time was two rooms. Shortly after I invited Nick Mravunac.

Everything has gradually grown since.

AU: Describe the facility

KY: The valley is small, and so sometimes it feels like there is not a lot going on, people are always hungry to meet new people and attend events of any kind, so the aim has been to open our space for people to come to, create, perform, and share a memorable time. All our rooms are built for creativity. It's a collaborative effort by many, to inspire and be inspired by. We are very lucky for our location being in the hidden nook we're in around Downtown Duncan.

AU: Give us an example of who is currently creating with you now.

Ky: As of this past month, we have 20+ members. Our crew is diverse. We tend to attract visual artists and musicians of all kinds, who use the space to produce. We have had writers and other talents abroad as well. One of the main members is Jessie Johnson who creates space-like creatures. You can check out her company called Cosmic Forest online.

AU: What kind of music has been performed inside your doors to date?

Ky: All kinds. Rock, Metal, Hip-Hop, Punk, Folk, Indie, Electronica, Alternative, etc. Hoping to have our first jazz show soon.

AU: What do you offer as a music performance space?

KY: Right now, we currently do all the booking ourselves, and don't yet have the capacity to rent out space for people to do their own shows, but we do offer collaborating in putting one on.

Our hopes are to one day be able to do weekly shows. Right now, it's looking like 2-3 a month. We are currently working through a massive list of bands and DJs who we want to have play here, or who have requested to play. I usually group bands in the same vein of music for a show, so people get an idea of the type of bands they are coming to see. I have a wide taste in music, so one week you might see a folk show; the next a punk rock show. Nick (The Wiseguy) runs one of the stages on his own which he calls The Launchpad. He usually has hip hop and DJs performing.

AU: What have been some memorable shows to date?

Ky: On my 30th birthday this year we had some Vancouver based No-Wave legends through here- Shearing Pinx, as well as Nanaimo based KMVP, Behaviors, and then three of my groups- The Flowering Eyeballs, Scuzz and Ky/Su. Couple weeks after that we had Bonnuitt, Listening Party, Caveman and The Banshee, and Plaid Snakes through. Both very remarkable shows.

AU: What is the Cosmic Creature Factory?

Ky: One of our main members Jessie Johnson runs a little doll making factory which she titles Cosmic Creatures, which are a variety of space-like creatures, usually made from fun fur and such.

AU: What's going on in the music scene for the Cowichan Valley currently?

Ky: There is a lot of hip hop, rock bands and folk

artists emerging. As for venues- Longevity John runs the Duncan Showroom, which has hosted a variety of music from all over. Other than that, there isn't really a whole lot happening here. We have a few smaller halls, bars and a couple theatres around, but none that have consistent shows. We're trying to change the scene around here for the better, bringing in more events for the youth and art-based folks of Cowichan. We are blessed to have Long Johns support in doing so.

AU: What are the plans for the near future and the space?

Ky: We are near finished all the renovations of our newly added downstairs space. Amongst those additions- an arcade area will be added in soon, as well a recording room/4th stage- where our DJ crew can mix, and bands can record. We plan to start a podcast, and a zine out of it too. Beyond that, we aim to pick up the pace with event organizing and do more than one a week by the end of summer. There have been many ideas laid down by members, like running a merch/art shop for instance. So, we could see all sorts of things in the future.

AU: Where do people find out more? Where are you accessible online and for contact info?

Ky: For now- you can check us out on Facebook/ Instagram under Time and Space Continuum.

AU: Anything else to want to say?

KY: We'd love to know and support more artists of all kinds out there. We also feature a monthly visual artist here. If you're a musician who wants to play in Duncan, or a visual artist, hit us up, or check out a show sometime. And if you want to get involved, please reach out!

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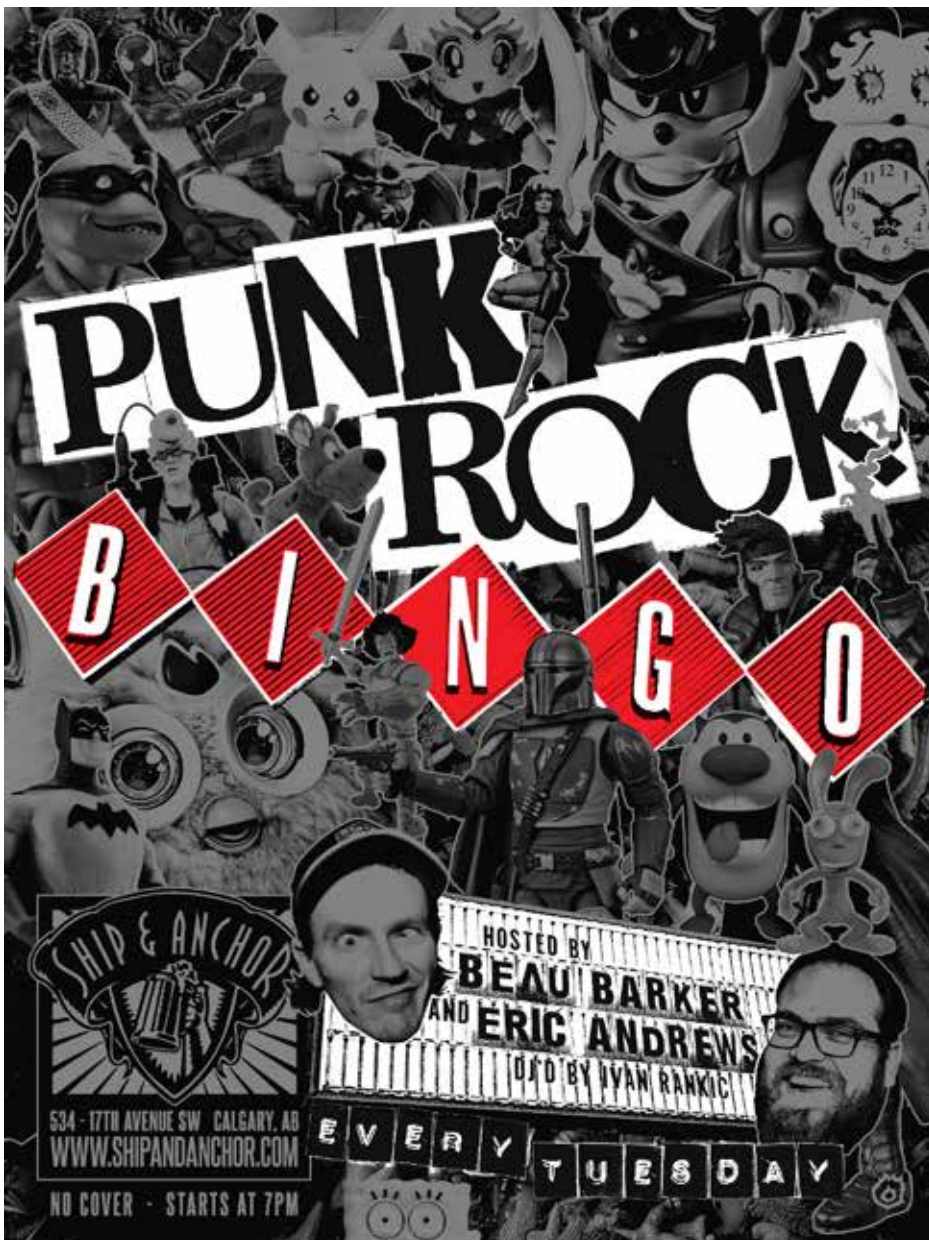
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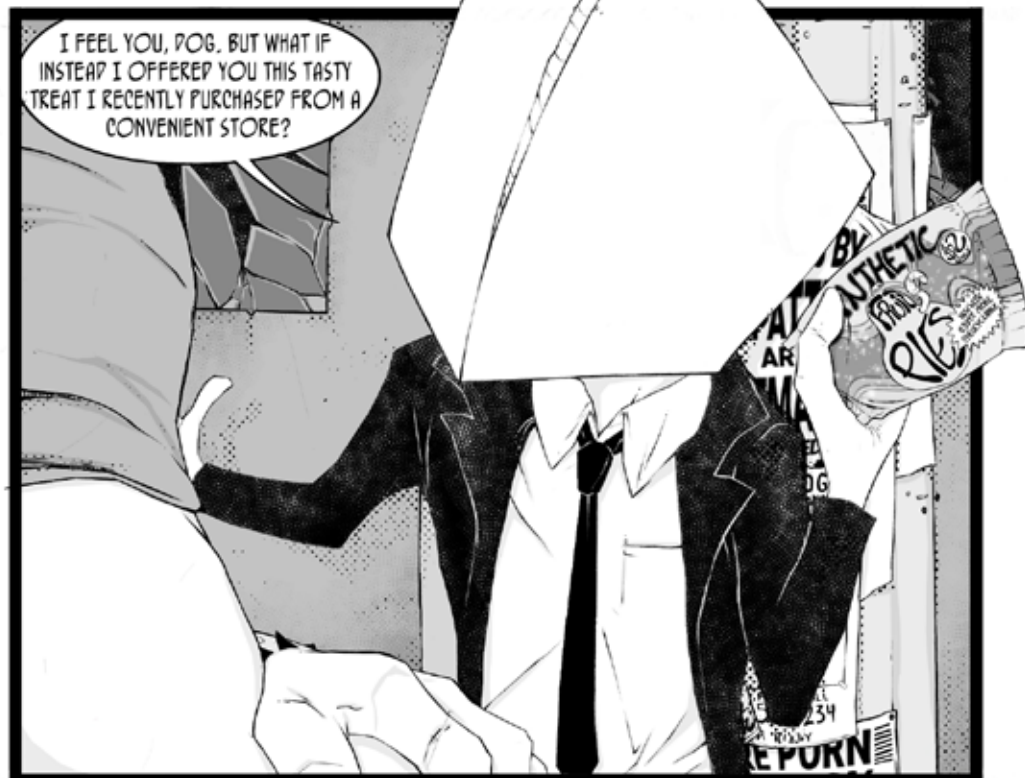
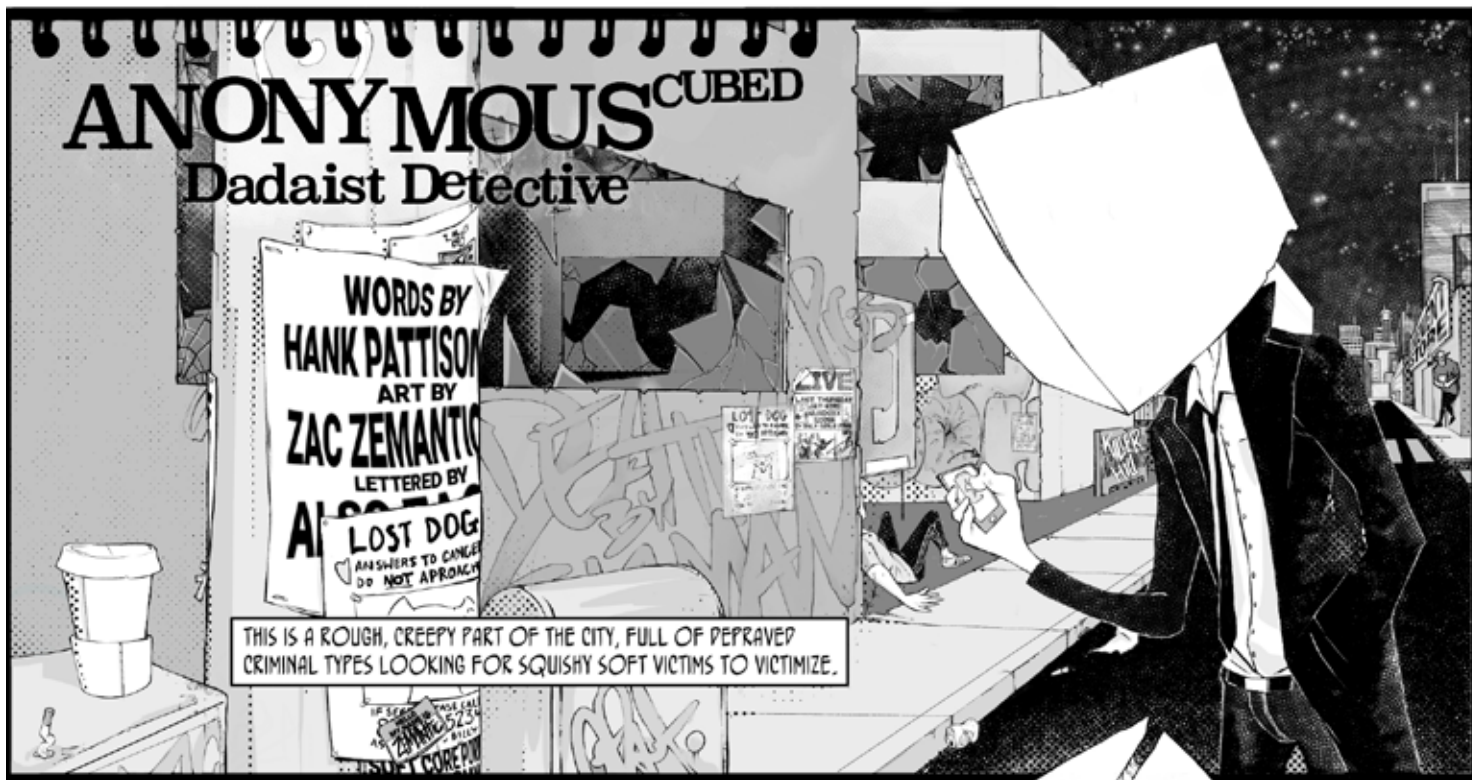
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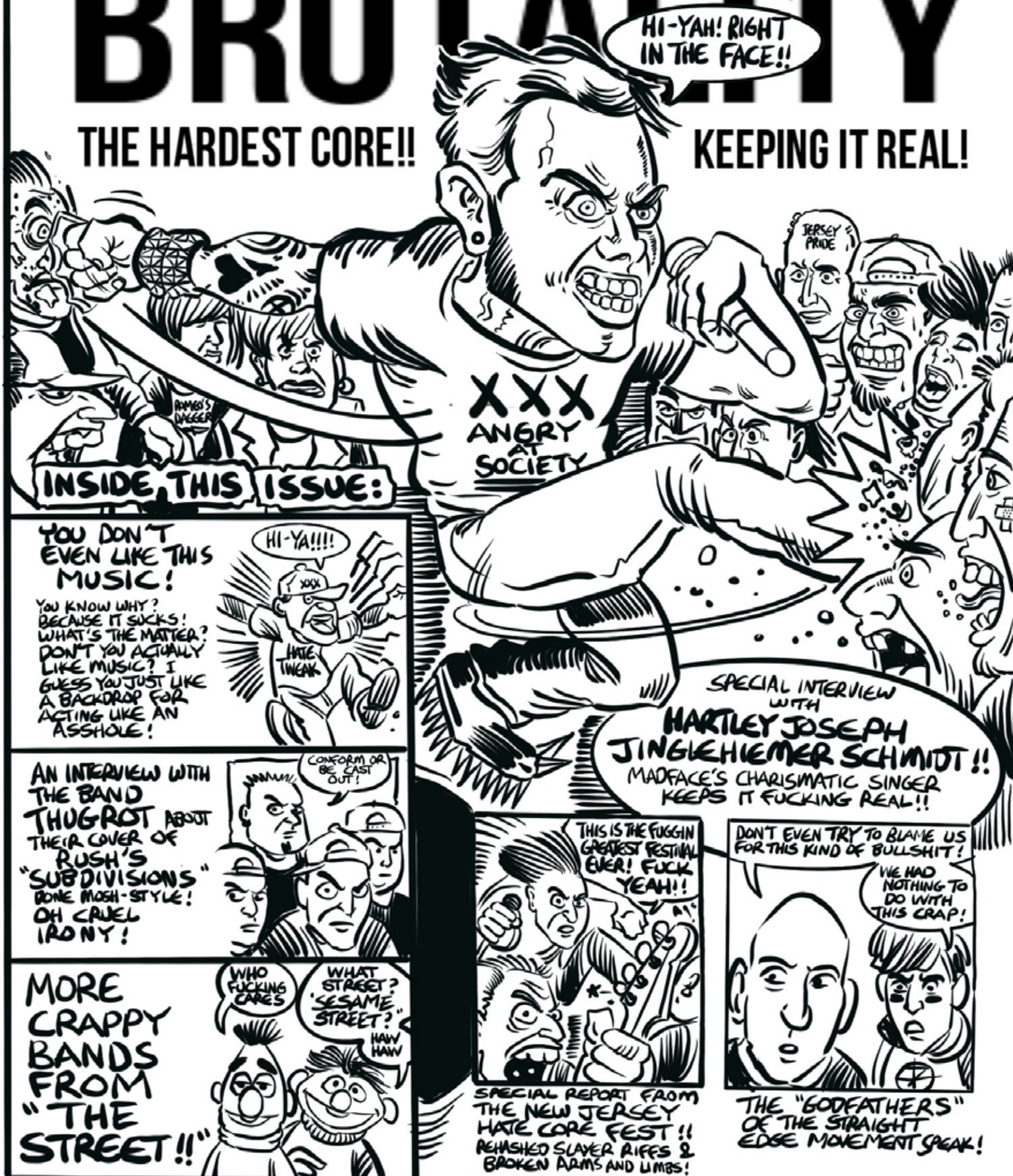


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BRIAN WALSH 22

Absolute Album Reviews

Alcatrazz - Official Bootleg Box Set: Volume 2 (1983-1984) Cherry Red Records

For fans of Rainbow, Yngwie J. Malmsteen and of course, Alcatrazz, there is much to love here.



Alcatrazz were formed by former Rainbow vocalist Graham Bonnet in the wake of his parting ways with Ritchie Blackmore (Ritchie was not a fan of Graham's short haircut!). The guitarist in Alcatrazz was a certain Yngwie J. Malmsteen, a man with similar influences to the Man In Black!

Alcatrazz's debut, the splendidly-named *No Parole from Rock 'n' Roll* is one the great '80s hard rock albums. Great songs, great performances from Yngwie and Graham. Great band! The proof of this there to be heard over the five CDs that makes up this enthralling box set of Alcatrazz live performances.

Highlights include instrumentals from Yngwie, 'Coming Bach' (see what he did there?) and 'Incubus'. Even at such a young age, clearly Yngwie was, and is, one of the all-time greats.

Graham's vocals are excellent. Songs from Alcatrazz's debut feature strongly, and there are treats like Rainbow's legendary 'All Night Long'. Live, with such a great band, the songs really have an added extra-special dimension!

Uplifting and so '80s! What more could you want?

-Steve Earles

Whiplash - The Roadrunner Years Cherry Red Records

Whiplash are probably best known for their drummer Tony Scaglione being a temporary stand-in for the legendary Dave Lombardo on Slayer's *Reign In Blood* tour. Which is a shame, as Whiplash are an excellent thrash metal band in their own right. Also, I feel the power trio format served them well, and gave them their own unique identity.



The original line-up of Tony Portaro, Tony Scaglione and Tony Bono recorded Whiplash's debut *Power and Pain* in 1989. Incidentally, Three Tonys, that must have made band practice a little confusing! 1986 was, in retrospect, the peak year for thrash metal. It's the year of Metallica releasing *Master of Puppets* with the great Cliff Burton (R.I.P). 'Nuff said.

While *Power and Pain* isn't in that league, it's still a great album, with its own unique identity, like Motorhead on speedier speed!

Follow-up album, *Ticket To Mayhem* featured Joe Cangelosi on drums following Tony Scaglione's defection to the mighty Slayer. It's a great thrash album! In 1989, a certain Glenn Hansen joined as singer for *Insult To Injury* (love the cover!)

This completes a trio of excellent albums for Roadrunner. Line-ups changed, but Whiplash survive to this day. Fair dues to them. True survivors of '80s thrash!

-Steve Earles

Gruntruck - Push Cherry Red Records

Originally released back in 1992, *Push* is a truly a great lost grunge album, and kudos to Cherry Red for



this well-deserved reissue. Hands down, *Push* is as good as the best of the work other Seattle bands released in this period. The riffs are staggeringly good, the songs are catchy and well-wrought. It's just... perfect!

'Machine Action', 'Crazy Love' and the title track are outstanding, but there's no filler, it's a great album to listen to as an entire body of work. I'm especially glad to see this album re-released because, inexplicably, Gruntruck never got the kudos they deserved. This should have been a number one album. They toured with Alice In Chains and Pantera, they had the well-deserved respect of their peers. I guess, like everything in life, it sometimes comes down to simple timing and luck.

But at least, we have *Push*, a searing testimonial to a truly great band!

-Steve Earles

Mortal Sin - Mayhemic Destruction/ Face Of Despair Cherry Red Records

Mortal Sin's *Mayhemic Destruction* and *Face Of Despair* are two stone cold classic thrash metal albums from the '80s that deserve to be a lot more well known than they are.



How did Cherry Red come up with the inspired idea of reissuing them? They must have a Metal Guru on tap! I hope they appreciate him! They're a rare breed. *Mayhemic Destruction* was released in Europe with an incredible Simon Bisley cover of a demon destroying Sydney Harbour. It's iconic now, but at the time The Biz was as obscure as this album sadly became. At the time, the major labels knew thrash metal was something the kids loved, so a signing spree occurred, and Mortal Sin ended up on Vertigo. How cool is that?

Reviews were good, though I thought at the time, and I was right, that being located so far away from the thriving thrash metal scenes in Europe and the USA would hurt the band, and in the long term I was right.

As to the music, it has more than stood the test of fire, there's a strong Bathory influence on tracks such as 'Lebanon' and the title track. This is not surprising. I met Steve Hughes, Mortal Sin drummer, after a Cathedral gig in Dublin some years ago and had a few pints with him. A splendid fellow! Funny as feck! He told me a great tale of how corresponded with Quorthon, who sent him crucifix made from chicken bones. Nowadays you'd have to do with an email! A great storyteller and comedian, no wonder he moved here to Ireland. He fits in well! As Dougal says in *Father Ted*, 'Sure, we're all mad, Ted.' Well, it helps!

Face Of Despair emerged in 1989. Another great album, more polished, but there was no point in doing the debut album all over again! Tracks like 'I Am Immortal' and 'Martyrs Of Eternity' showed a strong progression, and overall, this is another great 'lost' thrash metal album.

And they supported Metallica on the *Justice* tour in Australia. How cool is that? An added bonus are the liner notes, from the late great Malcolm Dome, a writer of great courage and integrity and honesty, a man who told it like it is. And stood for no unfair play. A hero to me, and one I intend to take inspiration in all those things from.

Also, the great Steve Hughes features in the notes too. Steve, we're due a few pints now the pandemic is over!

Overall, two utterly great metal albums, that should be a part of anyone who loves, not just classic '80s thrash metal, but our beloved metal in general!

-Steve Earles

UFO - High Stakes & Dangerous Men/Lights Out In Tokyo Cherry Red Records

Ah, it would take a book to detail the many adventures, records and line-up changes of UFO!



By 1992, UFO's commercial peak was far in the past, yet the band still had much to offer. So, in 1992 UFO released *High Stakes & Dangerous Men*, a record much better than it's 'concept' art would suggest- literally featuring high stakes! Talk about on the nose!

Joining UFO's one constant member, vocalist Phil Mogg, were drummer Clive Edwards, guitarist Laurence Archer, an excellent player, who played with the much missed Phil Lynott in Grand Slam, and the return of legendary bassist Pete Way.

High Stakes is, against all the odds, a great UFO album, full of raw energy, great songs, and a band genuinely firing on all cylinders.

Still huge in Japan, the band recorded the self-explanatory *Lights Out In Tokyo* on that tour. Again, it's an excellent album, mixing songs from *High Stakes* like 'Borderline' with classics like 'Rock Bottom'.

Overall, an excellent set of two fine albums that really compliment each other well.

-Steve Earles

Wasted - Heroes Die Young: Wasted Volume 2 (2000-2007) Cherry Red Records

Pete Way, erst-while bassist with UFO during their successful years (a band who were an influence on bands like Iron Maiden and Metallica), was the dictionary definition of hellraiser. Drinking the gross national production of small countries, that Pete Way lived until 2020 is a miracle in itself.



To try and do justice to Pete's story in a review is impossible, his excellent autobiography is where to go for that. Well worth a read (just don't try anything Pete did, you are not he, you will die!).

Suffice to say, Pete was with UFO in their glory Mad Axeman years wherein they played such songs as 'Doctor, Doctor' and 'Lights Out'. Happy daze! Pete departed the UFO fold in the early 80s (UFO have a Cradle of Filth like revolving line-up, more like a football team than a band). He then formed a band with Motorhead legend, 'Fast Eddie' Clarke entitled Fastway (how did they come up with such an original monicker?), but departed before recording anything with Eddie! This is a real Pete thing to do. He then joined Ozzy's band (!), supposedly by Sharon to keep Ozzy out of trouble!

Like trying to put out a fire with gasoline! This did not last long! It was a Pete thing. Then Pete formed Wasted, who released three

full studio albums, and supported Iron Maiden on part of the *Power-slave* tour, a bit of mismatch, it was down to Steve Harris being a big fan of Pete and indeed, Pete did inspire his stage poses.

Wasted called it a day, and Pete eventually returned to the UFO fold. This did not last, and he reformed Wasted, the entertaining results of which can be heard in this extensive five CD box set. We will never see Pete's like again, crank up 'Heroes Die Young', and raise a toast to a true legend!

-Steve Earles

Children Of The Bong - Sirius Sounds: The Planet Dog Years Cherry Red Records

The early 1990s was a fertile time for British electronic music (you have only to look at the huge success and innovation of the likes of The Prodigy, The Orb, The Shamen and the KLF, happy times! In the words of Frank Sidebottom- 'Smiley Face')



Another, less well-known, but no less significant band was Children of the Bong (a very Hawkwind-esque name, no coincidence). They were much beloved of the much-missed John Peel. Really, for anyone who knows of John Peel, there can be no stronger endorsement of Children of the Bong!

Formed by Rob Henry and Daniel Goganian, Children Of The Bong's music is the polar opposite of Gary Numan, for instance, in that it has a great warmth and positivity. It very much captures the time it was recorded in. Happy days!

The band released their debut album *Sirius Sounds* on the Planet Dog label, mixing electronica with dub rhythms and dance beats to great effect. This is uplifting stuff, analogue energy!

The original album is excellent but the extra two CDs of demos, compilation tracks and more, really is the icing on a very tasty cake.

Add insightful sleeve notes from the great Kris Needs, and you have a splendidly uplifting package, which, lets face it, is something we need now more than ever!

-Steve Earles

Tygers Of Pan Tang - The Wreck-Age/Burning In The Shade 1985-1987 Cherry Red Records

Tygers of Pan Tang originally formed in Whitley Bay (Dracula's home when touring Hammer film sets in England!) in 1978. Tygers of Pan Tang came to fame as part of the New Wave of



British Heavy Metal (The line-up at one point featured future Thin Lizzy, Whitesnake and Blue Murder guitarist John Sykes.

Alas, despite some success with albums such as *Spellbound*, the Tygers split in 1984. Not too long after the initial split, the band reformed with a new line up. But as is so often the case, things were never the same again.

Both *The Wreck-Age* (1985) and *Burning In The Shade* (1987) are very AOR compared to the band's original grittier sound. As an honest reviewer, I have to say, if you prefer the band's previous NWOBHM sound, best to avoid this.

If, however, you like '80s AOR music, you'll find much to enjoy here. The third CD of demos is interesting for fans. Overall, in soccer terms, a game of two halves!

-Steve Earles

Paul Di'Anno's Battlezone - Killers In The Battlezone Cherry Red Records

Paul Di'Anno is fondly remembered for singing on the two eternal classic first Iron Maiden albums, *Iron Maiden* and *Killers*. Paul brought a punkish street energy to Maiden which they never had under the auspices of his replacement Bruce Dickinson



(who jumped ship from Samson). Maiden would of course go on to release *Number of the Beast* with Bruce, and go on to worldwide success, to become a household institution. To give an indication of this, in the *Sherlock* TV series, Mrs Hudson does the housework to Iron Maiden. You go, girl!

This can't have been easy for Paul, always wondering, what if? (I sometimes wonder what if he had sung on *The Number of the Beast*). But, he soldiered on with a variety of projects until forming Battlezone with John Wiggins from Tokyo Blade. They released the album *Fighting Back* in 1986. It's an excellent album, but Battlezone were on a small label and this was at a time when thrash metal on the one hand, and hair metal on the other, generally was the order of the day. Battlezone were neither. The following year, Battlezone released *Children of Madness*, again, a fine release but the band split following the tours to promote it. It's a tough business!

As an added bonus in this excellent collection is a 2000 recording by another band of Paul's, Killers, entitled *Killers: Live At The Whiskey*, which does exactly what it says on the tin, and features several Iron Maiden faves from Paul's tenure with the band. Overall, an excellent collection for fans of Di'Anno-era Iron Maiden!

-Steve Earles

Kroovy Rookers - Nothing Seems to Stick When You're Stuck Phwamp Records, 2022

Street punk at its finest, Kroovy Rookers come at you like hooligans in the night, with fists swinging and amplifiers



turned to eleven. Edmonton has a long history of quality punk bands and Kroovy Rookers take their place among the best of them with dignity and style. With songs such as "Time Lord," which rails against the monotony of work and "Landlord Stomp, which condemns the tyranny of property owners, these boys are not reinventing the wheel, but the hooks are strong and the songs memorable. Not just that, but the production values and musicianship on *Nothing Seems to Stick When You're Stuck* are heads above earlier releases; after nearly two decades as a band, Kroovy Rookers are firing on all cylinders. This is music to sing from the rooftops or scream from the gutters—both a celebration of life and a scathing condemnation of society and rolled up into one. Grab your partner and swing them around because the party starts now.

- Chris Walter

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Red Fang
Bell Witch & Aerial Ruin: Stygian Bough
HELP

August 1, The Commonwealth, Calgary AB

Red Fang are a band, like Clutch, who write songs that are catchy enough to be played in between AC/DC and Nickelback hits on the radio, yet since 2005, the only people who seem to be into the band are those who are already schooled in the genres of stoner rock, doom metal, sludge and so on. Perhaps in another timeline things would be different, but for now let's live in our current one where for the most part, the musical taste of regular people sucks and Red Fang remains a cult classic.

The band hasn't toured in three years, though their recent appearance on Hellfest was filmed for the world to see and certainly amplified the hype for this tour, which featured a bunch of bands playing specific legs of the tour, including Big Business, Tacos!, Gold Sweats, HELP and Stygian Bough. For this particular date, fellow Portland PBR guzzlers HELP and the Bell Witch/Aerial Ruin collaboration Stygian Bough took the hon-

ors. Noise rockers HELP needed a tire to keep their drum kit from falling into the crowd due to the drummer abusing those skins so much while the three-piece doom outfit Stygian Bough played at such a volume that I swear they melted my ear wax.

Red Fang have been favorites of the Calgarian stoner metal community since their appearance at Sled Island over a decade ago. The feeling seems to be mutual, as the band worked hard this night to satisfy the Commonwealth crowd, playing well over an hour and probably past when they should have, with their encore song "Throw Up" being played with the house lights on. Before that, though, favorites like "Blood Like Cream", "Wires" and the damn-near historical "Prehistoric Dog" were met with stage diving and roars from fans wearing PBR can knight costumes. When Red Fang finally left the stage for good, all that was left was a wasteland of empty beer cans from the beer orgy they inspired.

-Ryan Dyer

previous, they held their own with tight hooks, crisp musicianship, and a bunch of crunching riffs.

No Fun at All took the stage second, performing a set that celebrated the slightly belated 25th anniversary of *Out of Bounds*, the group's most popular record. The LP's reputation was upheld immediately by the uber-catchy opener "Beat 'Em Down." Looking less like a punker and more like a philosophy professor, bespectacled frontman Ingemar Jannsson knocked down soaring hook after soaring hook with the nimbleness of a singer half his age. Additional highlights included the album's title track and gorgeous deep cut "I Have Seen" before a quasi-encore that featured additional tunes from the band's career.

Wasting no time, Satanic Surfers ripped into their similarly beloved opus, *Hero Of Our Time*. The fact that drummer-vocalist Rodrigo Alfaro was able to play that fast and sing that perfectly for the entirety of the set never lost its novelty. The two bands ultimately complimented each other well. Though both ostensibly play the same punk subgenre,

Alfaro and co. differentiated themselves by being a bit more metal, a bit more chaotic, and a bit more weird (look no further than the jazzy doo-wop of the record's title track).

Though the crowd skewed small, its die-hardness was clear. I spotted a few Satanic Surfers shirts that were so faded they were one dryer cycle away from crumbling to dust, and every chorus from both bands garnered an impassioned choir of old punks.

- Michael Luis

PHOTO CREDIT: John Carlow

Avatar
w/ Light The Torch and Otep
Vogue Theatre,
Wednesday, July 27th,
2022

Vancouver, BC

There's something that the fans outside waiting to enter knew about @avatarmetal that I didn't...

My wife had recently gotten me familiar with their music (currently 'Hail the Apocalypse' is a fave) but I didn't know what to expect at their live show. Metal shows can get rough.

I'm at the age where I prefer to 1) have a seat 2) be in bed after the show by 10pm.

As a concert photog-

rapher: The status quo for photography is, first three songs from the photo pit/no flash. Avatar surprised us and allowed us in there for four songs. I'm guessing they have a high respect for art.

Their energy and constant movement wasn't tricky in the least because they provided us with something concert photogs drool for ... Light! Great, fantastic, bright light!

As a human:

After shooting the first four songs, I headed back out to the crowd to join The Wifey who was in full head bang mode. A mosh pit had formed a few feet from us, and that got me on high alert. I saw a guy get dumped by another dude much bigger than him, and he hit the ground pretty hard.

The guy instantly picked him up off the floor, but he was hurt. They hobbled off together to the lobby, and

About 15 minutes later, they both came back arm in arm like long time brothers. The two cheered fresh beers and were full of smiles.

At one point during the show, Avatar took a small break. @johannes_avatar came back to the front of the stage with microphone in hand and gave someone a handful of ice. "Here," he said "put this on the back of your neck and cool off - I want you to make it to the end of the show."

There were a couple times during their crushing set that Johannes addressed the crowd. The stand out for me was when he spoke about the band and what they do.

"It's pretty silly what we are doing up here. But it means something to you, and that means something to us," then he promised the crowd that they'd, "be back to Vancouver very soon."

At the end of the evening we got the standard reminder to, "look after yourself, and look after each other."

Like I said at the beginning of typing all this though, I think the fans were already doing that. They knew they'd be looked after by their fellow concert attendees.

-Colin Smith

PHOTO CREDIT: Colin Smith

JPEGMafia
Capital Ballroom

In this issue of this very magazine I have a review of Satanic Surfers and No Fun At All, and it's hard for me to think about JPEGMafia's sold-out performance of confrontational experimental hip-hop without using that show as a point of reference.

Both were a few weeks apart, in the same city in the same venue, and on a weeknight. Though one featured guitars and drums and the other featured no more than a laptop, a microphone, and a man in a sweaty bandana, both events featured loud, heavy music blasted towards impassioned concertgoers. However, that's where the similarities end.

While the Swedish double-header featured no more than 200 people with about 10 of them under the age of 35, the JPEGMafia show made this 30-year-old writer feel like a decrepit old man on a temporary leave from a retirement home. Instead of feeling jaded however, I feel optimistic for the future of punk.

It only takes a few songs into his set to realize that JPEGMafia (aka "Peggy") is an unstoppable musical and political force. With song titles like "I Can't Fucking Wait Until Morrissey Dies" and an endless bag of hysterically scathing one-liners that place white supremacists, puritanical baby-boomers, and comparatively blander rappers in their crosshairs, his combination of aggression and satire puts him more in line with a lyricist like Jello Biafra than your average MC. He also spent about half of the show in the crowd, both ripping the pit alongside the kids screaming along to every lyric and even exploring the upper balconies of the venue with mic in hand.

As he says in his song "Papi I Miss You," "I'm a terrorist / I don't spit raps bitch, I spit rhetoric / and I be in your kid's mind gettin leverage," Peggy is instilling provocative ideals into a younger generation of music fans the same way that Dead Kennedys or Rage Against The Machine did to previous ones. If you think that there isn't any good punk anymore, you're not looking hard enough. It may not look or sound the way it used to, but a sold-out JPEGMafia rager is proof that the genre will always mutate and find new

minds to infect.

-Michael Luis

PHOTO CREDIT: Seth Brooks

Avatar
Light the Torch
Arrival of Autumn

July 24, The Palace, Calgary AB

The Swedish madcap meatballs known as Avatar were summoned from the forest they were writing their ninth album in to embark on a North American tour - because this heatwave is a killer and the citizens of the US and Canada need a little apocalypse to darken up those bright, sunny skies.

The *Wicked Tour Title* tour originally had Otep on the bill, though due to their non-appearance, Arrival of Autumn were given the golden opportunity to show their chops to the Avatar audience who made it to the Palace early enough to check them out. These Grande Prairie boys proved that the town they are from is more than just a place for lumberjacks and oil riggers, though perhaps the members do that type of thing for their day jobs - still, that type of work ethic has gone into the music, which was a blend of metalcore and deathcore. While they were impressive musically, their cover of "Bark at the Moon" was their most memorable song, which is often the case when a relatively unknown band plants a cover into their set.

Light the Torch were next (which Avatar vocalist Johannes Eckerström said was an allusion to smoking pot, which Howard Jones denied), who are no strangers to playing with Avatar, having done so when Trivium came through in 2018. Howard Jones, at this stage of his career can be seen as a legendary metal vocalist, though musically, Light the Torch, while often good, is also often run of the mill. Jones reminds me of a non-controversial Phil Anselmo - two vocalists who you'll see because of their name recognition and not exactly due to their current project. Still, Light the Torch had their share of impassioned fans and as an opener for Avatar, did exactly as they needed to - warmed the crowd up.

And now the freak show begins. Avatar are a band who are a bit of an anomaly in the metal scene - they are at a stage in their career where they are big enough to headline tours such as this and to play on significant festivals like Hellfest (just before BLS and Metallica), though they remain a bit underrated and dare I say, overlooked. Well, one only needs to see Avatar live to become a believer. From the second the show begins, the band, including the jester-faced Eckerström along with guitarists Jonas Järlsby and Tim Öhrström, bassist Henrik Sandelin, and drummer John Alfredsson are in character and in the zone. I would compare their stage entrance and some of their antics to Rammstein, whom they certainly match in heaviness as well (though they did not borrow the fire). The atmosphere that Avatar brings is one of their biggest selling points - the jester makeup I saw as initially hokey (who is this Alice Cooper wannabe?), though when integrated into songs like "Colossus" or "Smells Like a Freakshow" or "Bloody Angel", this characterization brought to life by Eckerström is like a metal Pennywise - luring the listeners into a world of darkness with a smile, a dance and a scream. It's hard to resist his charm and when the songs are this good, who would want to?

The band not only have the songs, but they have proven that they are hard working as well, playing nearly two hours in total. Some have taken notice, including Iron Maiden, who have enlisted Avatar as an opener for an upcoming tour in Brazil. Here's to the dark carnival growing even bigger with those shows and Avatar's next release.

- Ryan Dyer

Suicide Commando
DJ ZEIO

Abel Nightroad

June 30, 2022, Dickens Pub, Calgary AB

For the summer of 2022, Dickens Pub is turning into an electronic/industrial factory. Later in July, the Terminus Festival will return to the pub turned Western Canadian goth hub, though before that, Belgian aggrotech legend Suicide Commando made his triumphant return to the club after his first appearance in Calgary in 2019.

The date for the 2019 show was coincident-



tally exactly the same (June 30), though unlike the previous show, which featured God Module, iVardensphere and Virtual Terrorist as openers, this one featured DJs Abel Nightroad and DJ ZEIO. While not live bands, they did set the mood for the night with stomp-heavy setlists which had the crowd dancing before Johan Van Roy and his commandos took the stage.

Electronic acts featuring live instruments always have a beefier element to them, and with Suicide Commando, live drums provided an extra oomph with the already ultra-heavy beats programmed by Johan. As Suicide Commando has over 30 years worth of material, the setlist was packed full of tracks from every era. Early in the set fan favorite "God is in the Rain" appeared, with new songs "Bang Bang Bang" and "Trick or Treat" finding their spot in the middle of the set. "Cause of Death: Suicide" featured a countdown video graphic, adding a sense of urgency to the already hard stomping that was going on at Dickens, while "Die Motherfucker Die" saw Johan take to the crowd and engage with the riled-up rivetheads. The encore came with a trio of classics - "Unterwelt," "Bind, Torture, Kill" and "Hellraiser." Regarding "Bind, Torture, Kill," it felt so wrong but so right to dance to and shout the lyrics to a song about the BTK killer, though with "Hellraiser," it was impossible to resist the pleasures of sin.

-Ryan Dyer

**Deadwolff
Rebel Priest
Kontakt**

**July 1, 2022, The Palomino,
Calgary AB**

Vancouver rockers Rebel Priest joined up with Toronto's Deadwolff for the Rebel Wolff Western Canadian tour that stopped by The Palomino in Calgary on the nation's birthday. While Sloan played a free

concert at Fort Calgary five minutes away, those interested in the new breed of rock and roll piled into the Palo for a sleazy, beer soaked night that felt like it was 1985.

Opening the show were Calgary's Kontrol, who were making their debut at this very concert. Although it was their first rodeo, the band was prepared from a merchandising standpoint, with records, tapes, patches and t-shirts with their sphinx logo on it available. They played tracks from their debut EP, *First Contact*, which are Voivodesque, sci-fi themed jams that the crowd had no problem getting into.

Rebel Priest have been described as Motorhead meets Motley Crue. The band plays hard and sleazy, with their song topics being on point as far as ticking the thematic boxes in regards to wild, neon nights. "Lost in Tokyo," "Sleeping Like a Hangman," and "Electric Lady" are all stellar tracks, though I was happy to finally hear a song about those many crushes I've had with "Coat Check Girl." Like the huge stadium Guns N' Roses shows, there was one costume change - but what a change it was (hat to hat).

Deadwolff have every conceivable detail covered to make it look like they've come out of the mid-'80s - the logo, the tight jeans, the mullets, the mustaches, the stage moves, the attitudes and most importantly, the songs. The set was short and sweet, like the others this night, with the Thomas Wolffe led three-piece playing through their self-titled EP. The fans at the Palomino in turn were ready and willing to offer the band a shower of booze - either handing the band fresh bottles or spilling the brew on them when jumping on the stage and each other. For a tiny taste of the atmosphere Deadwolff offers up, check out their "Double Up" music video and make sure you catch them next time they come through town.

- Ryan Dyer

**WAKE
ATRÆ BILIS
The Weir**

August 6, Palomino, Calgary AB

Hometown heroes WAKE made their return to Canada after a run with Origin, Misery Index and Wolf King. The set of shows including this one and festival appearances at Loud as Hell and Moments Fest line up with the release of their latest album, *Thought Form Descent*, released on Metal Blade.

The homecoming brought the hugs and high fives, but these shows weren't just for shits and giggles - the Calgarian crowd could finally experience again what the rest of the world was learning - that WAKE are one of the best extreme bands on the planet right now.

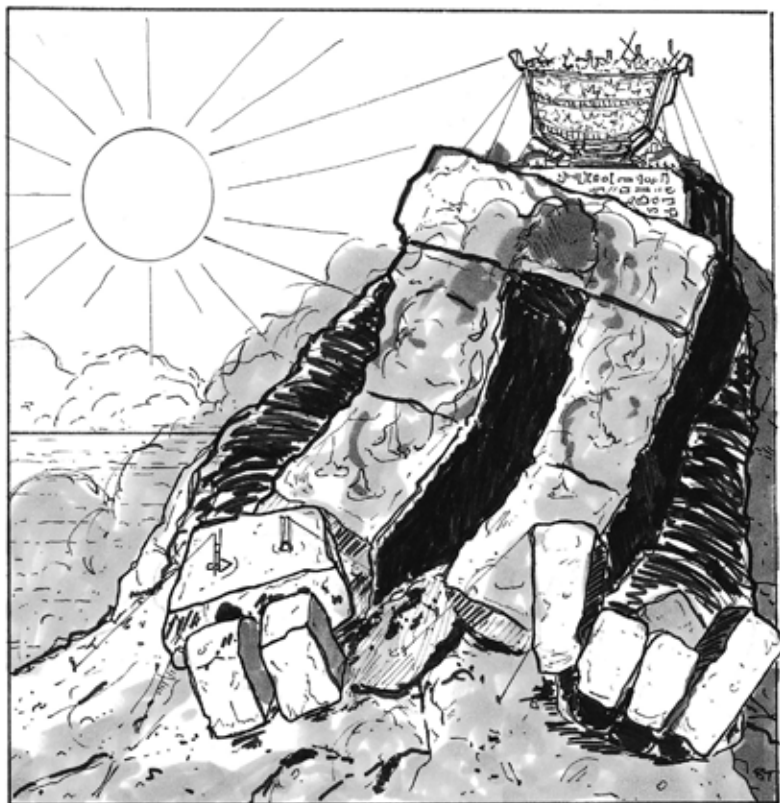
Opening the show were old pals of the band The Weir. These boys suffocate the listener with layer upon layer of overwhelming, oppressive riffs - guitarists Sergey and Jim being masters of using every segment of reverb and feedback to their advantage to create hypnotizing, sludgy doom.

Vancouver's ATRÆ BILIS unleashed a blend of death metal that sounded like Obituary, Morbid Angel, Death and Suffocation all in one. The pit became violent for these boys, with the youngsters in the crowd showing their stuff - getting nosebleeds but continuing on anyway.

As someone who has seen WAKE in their first form in 2011, the differences are interesting and currently, the band does feel like aveteran group who deserve to play on the big shows with the big bands. WAKE seemed genuinely excited to perform for their hometown friends, and the crowd showed its appreciation in a pit that looked similar to the one in Korn's "Blind" video (something I thought was impossible to achieve). Songs from their previous record *Devouring*

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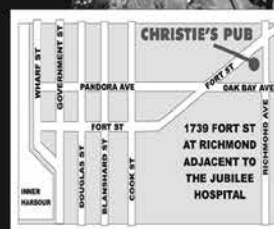


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Ruin made it into the set as well as the much anticipated new songs such as “Swallow the Light” which were both brutal and epic in a live setting. The set was a little short, though those who need a bigger WAKE fix can make it to one of their several Canadian shows coming up for Thought Form Descent’s run.

-Ryan Dyer

Origin
Abysmal Dawn
Tombs

June 8, 2022, Dickens, Calgary AB

“These people are the wreckers of civilization,” Nicholas Fairbairn said of artists including Genesis P-Orridge in 1976. If Mr. Fairbairn searched the metal underground during the past 25 years and discovered the tech/death band Origin, his head would probably explode much like the scene in *Scanners*. Fresh off their tour with Wake, Misery Index and Wolf King in May and with their new album *Chaosmos* freshly released, the band continues to prove that when it comes to pushing what we call “music” to the breaking point, Origin, like all-powerful Thanos-like entities, do so with ease and with smiles on their faces.

Killitorous were originally scheduled to open the tour but couldn’t make it due to some cursed van troubles - so here is my shout-out to check out and support the band.

Tombs then were moved to the opening slot for this night. From the bowels of New Jersey, the hooded menaces shrouded in Mayhem-esque, dim blue lights. This band is perfect for those who love stripped down, straightforward, riff-heavy metal that is completely cvlt, with a touch of Lemmy in the vocalizations. For tours that are heavy with the technicality, bands like Tombs are truly welcome tour mates as such a contrast in styles to the headliner is needed.

From the sunny bowels of Los Angeles, Abysmal Dawn were next up and as direct support to Origin, were the perfect balance of being technical and brutal, not sacrificing one for the other. In support of their new EP, *Nightmare Frontier* via Season of Mist, the band showed why they are one of the best death metal acts of the last 20 years. On this night, what made them stand out was the clarity of the sound, which matched their

studio output. I have to hand it to the sound technicians for this show - instead of a swarming soup of notes, every note and gurgle from band leader Charles Elliot could be heard, understood, and most importantly, enjoyed.

A week prior to this show I caught Brian Cox’s lecture on space and black holes - it certainly made the old noggin do some trapeze. Origin, with *Chaosmos*, reminded me of Cox’s show in that they take the already quite complex ideas and formulas related to space and put them to music. It’s really a match made in a pulsar. The swarming shit-storm of the cosmos was brought into Dickens, then, and the absurdity of the band’s technical prowess was almost too much to handle at times - like an astronaut not having the right protective equipment and then getting incinerated when landing on an unknown planet. Still, the people tried to keep up with them.

With Origin, though, it’s not all ex-transterrestrial - vocalist Jason Keyser has the ability to give the band’s live show a sense of humanity with his almost comedian-like banter between songs. On this night, he amped up the crowd substantially (especially when comparing Calgary’s willingness to give’er to Edmonton). A wall of death during “Portal” threatened to bust open a hole to another dimension, where perhaps the music of Origin is the norm. In this dimension, though, there is only one.

-Ryan Dyer

Orville Peck
Aug. 4, 2022 at The Palace Theatre, Calgary

Image can be everything for a musical artist. One can even argue that some performers - like Kiss or Duran Duran - wouldn’t have had nearly the success they enjoy without their carefully crafted public personas, images that can often overshadow the high quality of their songs or distract from the mediocrity of their music.

Orville Peck has one of the more striking alter-egos to emerge in recent music business history: a long, tall cowboy who leans unabashedly into rhinestones, wears a lone ranger mask with an attached fringe that obscures most of his face, and often removes his jacket to expose moderately muscled, heavily tattooed arms when the bright stage lights get too hot. It’s a persona

that could easily be dismissed as gimmickry if it wasn’t backed up by a strong performance and solid songwriting. And what a performance it was! It’s appropriate that I first experienced an Orville Peck live show in Calgary, a city known for rodeos, where its people have stretched what it means to look and sound like a cowboy or cowgirl well beyond what their frontier rancher ancestors would recognize. The Palace Theatre, located in the downtown core of Calgary, is a relatively intimate, multi-tiered performance space that brings to mind cabarets and burlesque shows, and was a perfect venue for Peck’s theatrical stage presence.

And this is where Orville Peck pleasantly surprised me. As I mentioned before, his persona is a powerful one, but it is one I misinterpreted. Between the mystery of the masks, the mournful crooning, and spaghetti-western guitar twanging of his first album, *Pony*, I pictured him as a lost character from a David Lynch film or even *Twin Peaks*, semi-existing as a sinister DVD deleted scene. Much of Peck’s marketing encourages this misinterpretation, especially the dark and powerful cover art of his latest album, *Bronco*, portraying him as gold-plated Western demigod, unafraid of the dangerously agitated stallion rising behind him. Instead, Orville Peck puts on a show that can best be described as joyous. After the almost chant-like opening of the first song, “Big Sky”, the energy instantly became assertive, not aggressive, and strangely celebratory in spite of the typically mournful lyrics of much of Peck’s alt-country oeuvre. Even when he sat down at the piano for the slower tempo of a real crooner like “Drive Me, Crazy”, the energy of room remained, suspended and building in anticipation of Peck pulling the trigger on the next rocker in his set.

A lot of credit for the electric atmosphere in the room has to be given to the crowd attending the show. Because of my incorrect assumptions about Orville Peck’s vibe, I expected an audience that would heavily feature black cowboy hats atop darkly eye-lined biker gear and a healthy representation from the Goth community. There were a few of those to be sure, but the majority of people who didn’t just show up in jeans and t-shirts were proudly dressed in their own version of

Peck’s sub-culture cowboy style. And when I mention pride, I do mean Pride. Orville Peck is openly gay, and a whole spectrum of Calgary’s queer community was out to celebrate this new musical icon. As for cowboy hats, there were many, and as they say, pink is the new black.

Peck’s strong baritone voice was in excellent form as he performed songs from both of his albums. The newer album, *Bronco*, contains more Western-inflected rockers than his

first album did, but all of the material worked well together, giving the audience more variety than a solely *Pony*-focused concert would have. A couple of highlights of the show: Orville continues his tradition of handing out roses to fans who stand out in the crowd, and he performed a brilliant cover of The Replacements’ “Can’t Hardly Wait”.

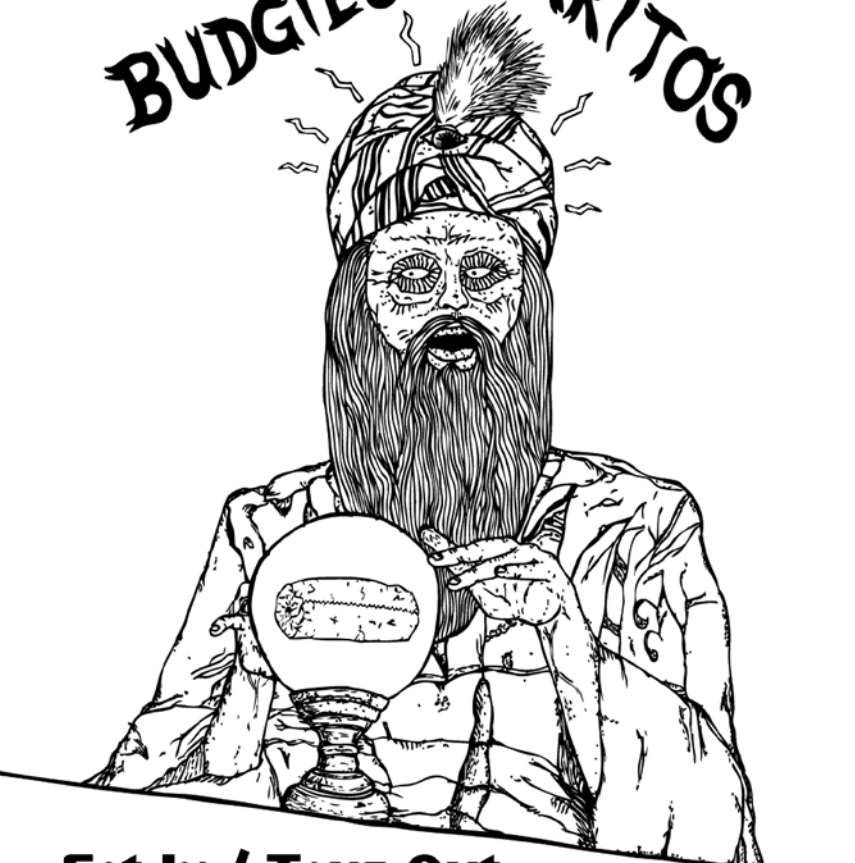
Before Orville Peck took the stage, Calgary’s own folk/country/rock singer-songwriter, Mariel Buckley,

past winner of Project Wild, warmed up the crowd. Her set was plagued by some sound issues, often burying her voice in the mix, but the quality of her songs was still apparent. Also, her supporting band was tight and comfortable with the material, while bearing a remarkable resemblance to SNL’s cowbell-loving version of the Blue Oyster Cult.

- Darin Gregson

(Photo by Darin Gregson)

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Purl ale and the industrial revolution...

"The early bird gets the worm wood"

By Daniel Van Netten

The mythological power of plants are engrained in human history. Wormwood has a history of fear and misunderstanding. The tale goes when Satan left the garden of eden, all that could grow in the serpents path was wormwood... Often called by its nickname "old woman" wormwood is an extremely bitter herb, a key ingredient in



Absinthe. In the 1700s in England well water was contaminated, the dead lined the streets, rats were rampant, rivers were contaminated ... and drunks survived. People who drank beer were drinking pasteurized water before the understanding of microorganisms. Cholera, a common disease at the time, was spread from fecal matter entering the drinking water supply, the disease was extremely deadly. The boiled water would prevent ailments of circumstances. Wormwood has a way of curing an upset stomach...

Purl houses became a way for workers to have a couple of pints of 8% wormwood ale before work. This was often an encouraged worker health requirement, especially for those who worked on scaffolding. Purl houses were only open 5am-7am depending on the time of year. William Shakespeare wrote about Purl in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and Charles Dickens in "Old Curiosity Shop". The psychotropic effects of the wormwood are mild but were definitely the catalyst of healthy working class.

A friend of mine whose Grandma from Czech used to give him wormwood as a kid for stomach ailments, to this day he cannot stand the taste. I read about Purl ale in 2019, in a hotel in Vancouver after a show... the mystique of this style, I decided it needed to be resurrected from the grave... what the research came up with was an



ingredients list of wormwood, juniper berries, horseradish, black pepper, bitter orange zest, ginger etc... the few that liked it still talk about it to this day, but still stands as the most unpopular beer I've ever brewed.

BREWING 101

PUNKS. NOT DEAD

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CROSSWORD NO. 76 **SUMMER, 2022**

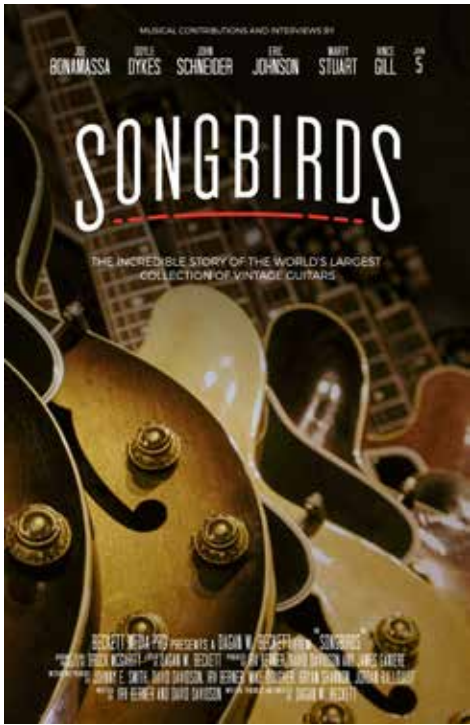
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Absolute Film Review

Songbirds

Every electric guitar has a story to tell and to hear it means visiting the Songbirds museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Here, people can pay a fee to play it, or simply admire its place in evolutionary history. Dagan Beckett's documentary, *Songbirds*, not only gives us a look at how this exhibit came to be, but also offers a quick lesson on how this musical instrument influenced American pop culture. I agree that after The Beatles, a lot of kids wanted to learn how to play the guitar. For me, I wanted to shred like Ace Frehley on a red starburst Gibson Les Paul.

Although the foundation that runs this space changed David Davidson's (the founder) modus operandi and has a new collection of guitars to display since *Songbird's* closing and reopening as an educational environment, I feel nothing's changed. The people running this organisation are dedicated to the American dream. They want to show how this instrument shaped the sound of today's music.



Whether it's blues, jazz, country or new age, it's become quite the versatile instrument. I know it can be used like a MIDI instrument too!

Instead, it's regarding what the guitar represents as a tool for appreciating music. The museum is also a venue for musicians to perform. It's not about the country musicians, either. Although we hear from John Schneider and the country music contingent a lot more than John Z, guitarist for Rob Zombie, I'm okay with that. The talkie moments show us the people who love running this museum. We truly see how much of Davidson's heart and soul went into growing this museum, and it was no doubt very hard for him to decide he has to close its doors. Thankfully, a silver lining existed and it wasn't from a broken guitar string.

The place known as Songbirds may well be slightly different, but I feel what this film does best is to show just how beautiful that sound is for anyone walking past.

— Ed Sum



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ARTIST PROFILE



Peter Allen a.k.a Sper

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

PA: I am head disciple of the Skuzzabot cult. Bill paying skills include mural and canvas painting, sewing, music video directing, and writing/curating books.

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

PA: I suffer from only child syndrome so I've made art since childhood to kill time and loneliness, the twin towers of boredom.

AU: How would you describe the art you create?

PA: I create abstract realism. Using mycelium of the skuzzabot fungus, I decompose reality into style threads that connect all my cultural influences and teachers. I have harnessed the inertia of explosives and can carve the future out of splatters and spills. I am a fat cap master of aerosol. I use the spray can like a samurai ballet dancer on shrooms. My hand is rocksteady with any brush.



unique?

PA: My work is unique because every time I paint something new happens. That's why I write Sper. I rarely plan the work, it is on the spur of the moment. My experience using old paint from the garbage dump has forced me to adapt to



letting the medium guide me. I'm not interested in the status quo graffiti piece. I need to make something that breaks rules and pushes style into new and sometimes awkward areas. The way of skuzza.

AU: What are some of your favorite projects you've been involved with?

PA: My favourite project was making the revolutionary cyborg wedding band mobile unit remix music video. I hired my music producer buddy Abstrakt Sonance to remix a dub version of their song "Things Have Thoughts." Then I got one of my videographer buddies, Jo Bronson, to data mosh the drone footage we shot at summit park with the Gary



SKUZZABOT
スカザボット
RECYCLED ART SPIRIT
@skuzzabot

AU: What are some of the major influences on your artistic style?

PA: Composting, Retro futurism, Old sci-fi book covers, record covers, Tiki, Japanese patterns/textiles, shodo calligraphy, zen, multiculturalism, cubism, manga, the natural and supernatural world. Garry Oak keeps my shit gnarly. The fauvists, Limner group, group of seven, Picasso and good old Vincent. Young Jarus from Toronto is my current favourite muralist. Stare from Montreal.

AU: What name do you write when painting your graffiti? Are you part of a crew?

PA: "Ahem!" (Assumes peacock pose) I've written Sper since 94. My crew is IBC. I also rep a crew from New Zealand called DKC and a younger crew in Victoria called KHB.

AU: What makes your artwork

Oaks. Ian George has a brain sculpture in it, there's smoke bombs and a hot tattooed lady. Favourite mural might be the flashers at Sooke pot holes. I painted my letters as pervers in khaki trench coats... exposing my tag instead of cock and balls. Entitled "writing obscenities" it was an homage to the PAL crew in France. For all you easily offended, stuck up Victorians.



AU: What mediums do you work in? Is there something new you've always wanted to try?

PA: Other than spray paint, I use oils on canvas and ink on rice paper. Old house paint and rollers. I sew various textile pieces and make fabric patterns

with screen prints and stencil. Recently I started making multicoloured stencils and learning to manually colour separate. I make matcha tea bowls with clay hand building sometimes. I still put a zine out once in a while using cut and paste photocopy methods, I hate computers. I'm not looking for any more mediums, it's enough just trying to keep putting merch like shirts, hats, patches and stickers out.

AU: Any other hidden talents unrelated to art?

PA: In my head I think I could do comedy. I live for making people laugh in every day life. I'd rather entertain people and speak to crowds than paint by myself but I've put my life into art so to switch up at age 43 and enter a new craft almost feels blasphemous or disrespectful.

AU: Do you take commissions? What's the strangest thing you've ever been asked to create?

PA: I love getting commissions. Once I did a Garry Oak painting with matching wedding rings for a couple I'd never met. I gave the jeweller drawings of two leaves fitting together. I also made a larger banner that said P.O.O.P for the "People Opposed to Outfall Pollution."

AU: What's the latest thing you have been working on?

PA: Currently I'm painting a gentleman's cigar lounge mural with my wingman Arok. It's for the Devonshire Market on Goldstream Ave in Langford.

AU: Have you ever seen your art tattooed on anybody?

PA: My first love, Joanne, got my tag on her beautiful bum. Damn I miss being in love. Anyway my homey Murge got some calligraphy shapes as well as homey Tristan on his entire spine. Some of my crew members got skuzzabots on them but they don't talk to me



anymore so maybe they are covered up or lasered off by now, haha.

AU: Dream project you are still dying to do.

PA: Dr. Frankenstein, a real live skuzzabot to keep me company. I will probably just hook up jumper cables to a compost bin under the full moon and there you go. Seriously though I want to keep working with Jenkum on music videos and get into film.

AU: Anything else we should know about you that might surprise our readers?

PA: I'm releasing an album on iTunes this month of beats I commissioned with Abstrakt Sonance. We will press vinyl next year with album art by Bryan Turnbull. Another surprise... I'm not a tuff street graffiti guy, I'm a sensitive Mama's boy.

AU: Where can we see examples of your art online?

PA: I've got the usual slew of socials. @skuzzabot or @peterallensper on IG. YouTube is tricky to find but search skuzzabot and something should come up. Lots of music vids on there.



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Eaten By Sharks

Interview with Chris Chaperon – Lead Guitar

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Mag, for readers unfamiliar with Eaten By Sharks, who are you, and what do you do?

Chris Chaperon: We are a technical death metal band, from the depths of the Niagara region. Obviously from our name, we have a bit of an obsession with the nautical way of life, specifically sharks, and have chosen to keep things wet and wicked! If you love Riffs and Sharks, you're gonna love dredging us up!

AU: How is the metal scene in the Niagara Falls region?

CC: Booming! Right now, we have a great mix of all things distorted, from brutal death metal to metalcore, to slam, to tech-death, we have a bit of everything. We also have a sweet venue, the warehouse concert hall that has been around for a few years. It is a hub for all locals to play for each other, and open up for out-of-town metal acts that swim through our city. I also have a hand in booking metal bands at the warehouse, so I get to

see a lot of the heavy talent and have been known to throw a killer pool party or two with them!

AU: You probably get this asked all the time... Eaten By Sharks is an awesome name, what's the origin story of it?

CC: Years ago, a close friend and I were plotting to make a heavy band, blast beats and breakdowns were the only formulae other than it being

brutal! Eaten By Sharks, will be the name, he said and it just stuck with me as it was brutal as fuck and I was a fan of the movies and anything to do with Sharks! As the idea grew and formed into tangible songs, the nautical concept blended perfectly with the riffs, which had progressed past the simple beginnings, as the added members brought their own influences, leading to a more progressive and technical approach. Fun fact; when we get any artist to work on logos or album art they tend to have a lot of fun with the concept and it yields some pretty killer results.

AU: We watched your music video for "Dead Weight," very sick track and video, how was it working with Joe Lyko of Dark Moon Productions to create and direct its concept?

CC: Joe is an amazing guy to work with. I think the fact that he also plays in bands makes the experience so sick. From getting a simple concept that lent itself to the nautical shit we are always reaching for, and the song being about facing the elements of nature, Joe nailed it! The time we had shooting the vid was a blast and Joe was so quick to get the material back, very efficient. The fact he shreds in a metal band is a bonus, too!

AU: You produced the album with Christian

Donaldson of Cryptopsy, how was it working with him? How did you choose him as your producer?

CC: Christian had produced a friend of ours who was gracious enough to pass our name along to him. We had a bunch of producers in mind but he was at the top of our list due to the fact he had produced some of our favourite bands, Despised Icon, beneath the massacre etc. oh, and the fact he is in fucking Cryptopsy! We are all Canadian metal heads and all grew up listening to them, unreal! We hooked up with him and he was very easy to work with, sent him the pre-pro tracks and went from there. We ended up staying up in Montreal while he tracked us and got to spend

quite some time with the dude. He was so good at getting the best out of us and really easy to work with. Then we got the mixes back, wow, fucking incredible to hear the songs represented with his skills.

AU: We read that your album is about "Matt wanted to invoke feelings of fear and bring you along as a first-person, a victim of society in a merciless assault of sharks infiltrating a people's world." Do you think it's time for humans to be eradicated by sharks or other animals for our destructive behaviour to the planet and its creatures?

CC: Of course, not. We have done such great things as a society to help each other and be respectful of the environment around us.... or we could just pull the plug, flood the oceans onto the land and let a swarm of sharks teach the landlubbers the error in their ways!

AU: If each member could be a shark, what kind of a shark would you be and why?

CC: Justin would be a Hammerhead, because drums. Danno would be a Tiger Shark because of the aggressive tendency of his riffs. Matty would be the Great White because his vocals are

top of the chain. Tyler would be a Goblin Shark because he likes anything that's weird. I would be the Megalodon because I'm old as dirt! Yeah, I've thought quite a bit about this.

AU: Would you ever think about pulling off a Metalocalypse moment? Eaten By Sharks perform on a floaty surrounded by Great Whites and fans willing to swim to survive?

CC: Dude, this is one of the best questions we have gotten yet. Absolutely we want that! The sharks would obviously be decked out with lasers, the ocean would turn red and there would be one hell of a mosh pool! Funny you should mention *Metalocalypse*, if you check out the lyric video

for shallow water, it has some Dethklok vibes to it, in a technical death metal format.

AU: If sharks loved metal ... Who do you think would be their favourite metal band, besides yours of course...

CC: It would be Dethklok, mermaid fucking murder baby!

AU: Will Eaten By Sharks, be touring this year? Any upcoming shows?

CC: We are currently working out plans to get on the road. We have our album release, on Aug 26th in

our hometown St. Catharines, at The Warehouse, as well as some southern Ontario dates.

AU: Anything else you like to add?

CC: At the end of the day, we are just a handful of friends, writing music that we love and getting to play it for some amazing people. If you love Death metal, if you love Sharks then you are going to fucking love us. Fins up!

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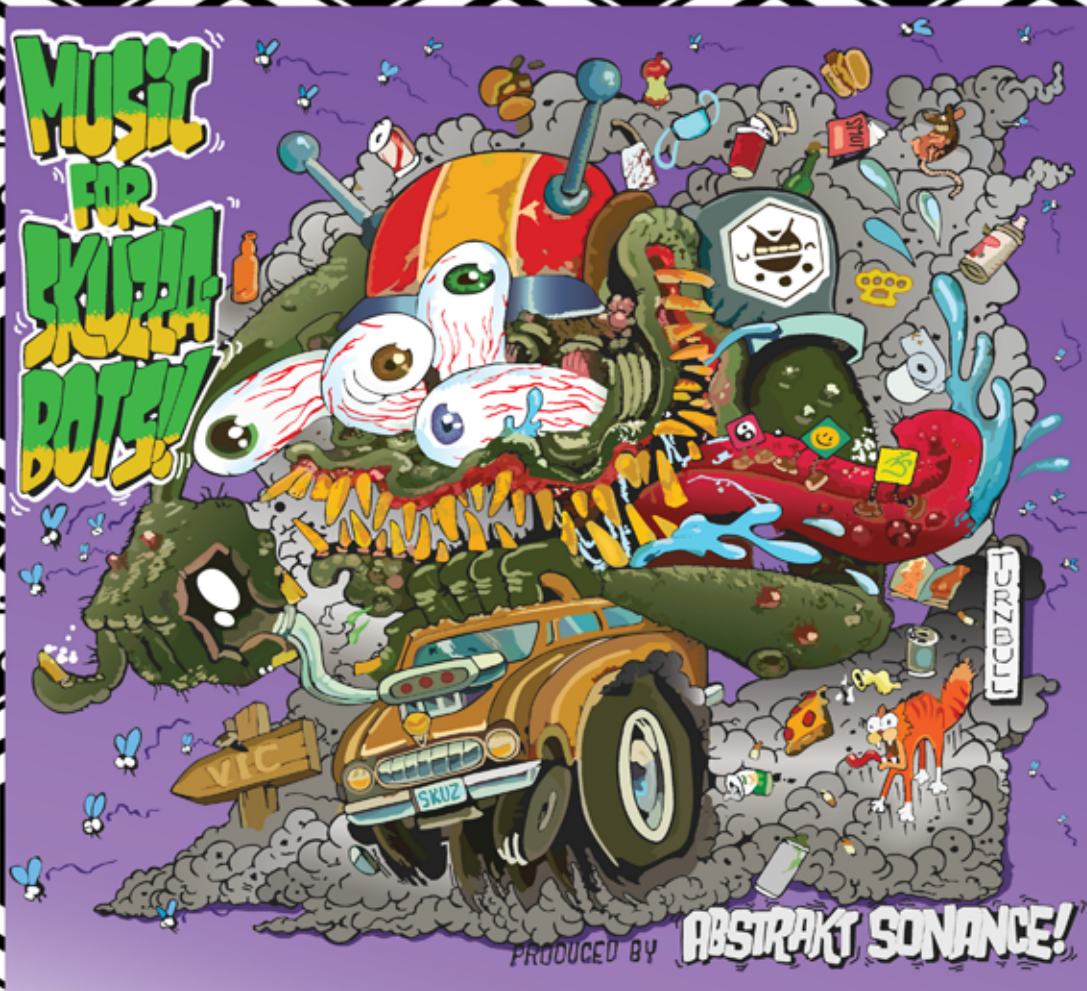
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SNUFF

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Interview with guitarist Loz Wong - Part 2
by Ira Hunter and Ty Stranglehold

AU: Who is currently in the band with you and what are their hidden talent?

Loz Wong: At the moment we have the ever-present Duncan on drums and vocals, myself on guitar and backing, Dan on bass and backing, Oli on trombone, Dave on trombone along with his daughter, Flo, on tenor sax, Lee the Mod on Hammond organ, so in total for the full monty line-up there are 7 of us. Dan's hidden talent is growing massive side burns (or bugger grips if you prefer) and being a 1970s throwback in 2022. Lee the Mod is really good at being a Mod. He still rides his Vespa PX200.



and the big stick).

Flo is a mega talented multi-instrumentalist. I'm just fat and old, with big hair.

AU: What can people expect from Snuff live?

LW: So, we can now go out as the traditional three piece, or we can go with a trombone or two, a tenor sax, and the Hammond organ. Depending on availability of the different members, for a given show. An added extra is having Dan on vocals as we can now do three part harmonies, or at least a pretty good impersonation of that.

AU: Any career highlights and lowlights?

LW: One of my personal gig highlights was playing Reading Festival in 1999, the stars aligned that day and we had an amazing show.

Also playing a show to a huge crowd at the foot of Mount Fuji, near to the "suicide" forest and the Rocket Coaster in Japan was not too bad.

The Fat Wreck 25 year anniversary gig in Tokyo was pretty incredible, 20K crowd got the pooper going on the night.

One huge low point for us all was losing Andy Creighton far too early, he was an original member of Snuff, and an unreal bassist. As time passes we've lost some true heroes of that whole punk era, Dickie Hammond from Leatherface comes to mind, he was one of the best guitarists I've ever known as well as a lovely bloke, Tony Sly, he loved his footy, a top lad, he went too soon, we miss them all.

AU: What else should we know about you?

LW: I have massive hair? I have more grey hair than Gandalf? Seriously though, I have finally pinned down my guitar sound (it only took 35 years) and it's all over the new record. I am very very pleased about that.

AU: Anything else to promote?

LW: Snuff may have some secret stuff coming out soon, these might be wildly variant versions of some old and new songs, or not. Stay tuned or go to the website or something.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

LW: Science is so bloody cool. And cycling. And Cricket. And graphic novels. Not war. War is shit.

AU: How do people find you online?

LW: Mostly they find me to be a bit annoying and not funny at all

AU: Ty also needs to know if and when SNUFF will return to Canada.

LW: We will return with bells on, mate. Mainly because of Poutine and BC greens. Seriously

though, we love Canada, all of it, the Native, the French or English speaking. I have always had a massive blast over there and it is a lot more chill than the (ahem) other place...

AU: Ty also asks... Many fans feel there is a distinction between the early era of the band and the "Fat" years. Does the band feel there is a distinction?

LW: If a distinction is made then the ones I am aware of are the "original line-up" fans and then those who came on board at the "1996 line-up" stage and of course there are those who just love Snuff regardless of line-up. There is also a "we only

listen to Snuff before the cover versions started" faction of fans. I say fair do's to all of them and each to their own.

I would also suggest the change in members over time affected the overall sound of the band as this is inevitable especially when it's a songwriter who leaves the band. So in terms of then writing new songs, the direction has to change somewhat but that's normal for any band who evolve, you can't just make the same album over and over again. Either way, it's all very subjective.

We, as a band, have an inordinate amount of fun when we're all together making music and that's all we care about really, well that and making sure you're all also having the same fun as us at the same time.

Anyway, thanks for the interview. Hope to hit the Canadian shores really soon. Nice one.

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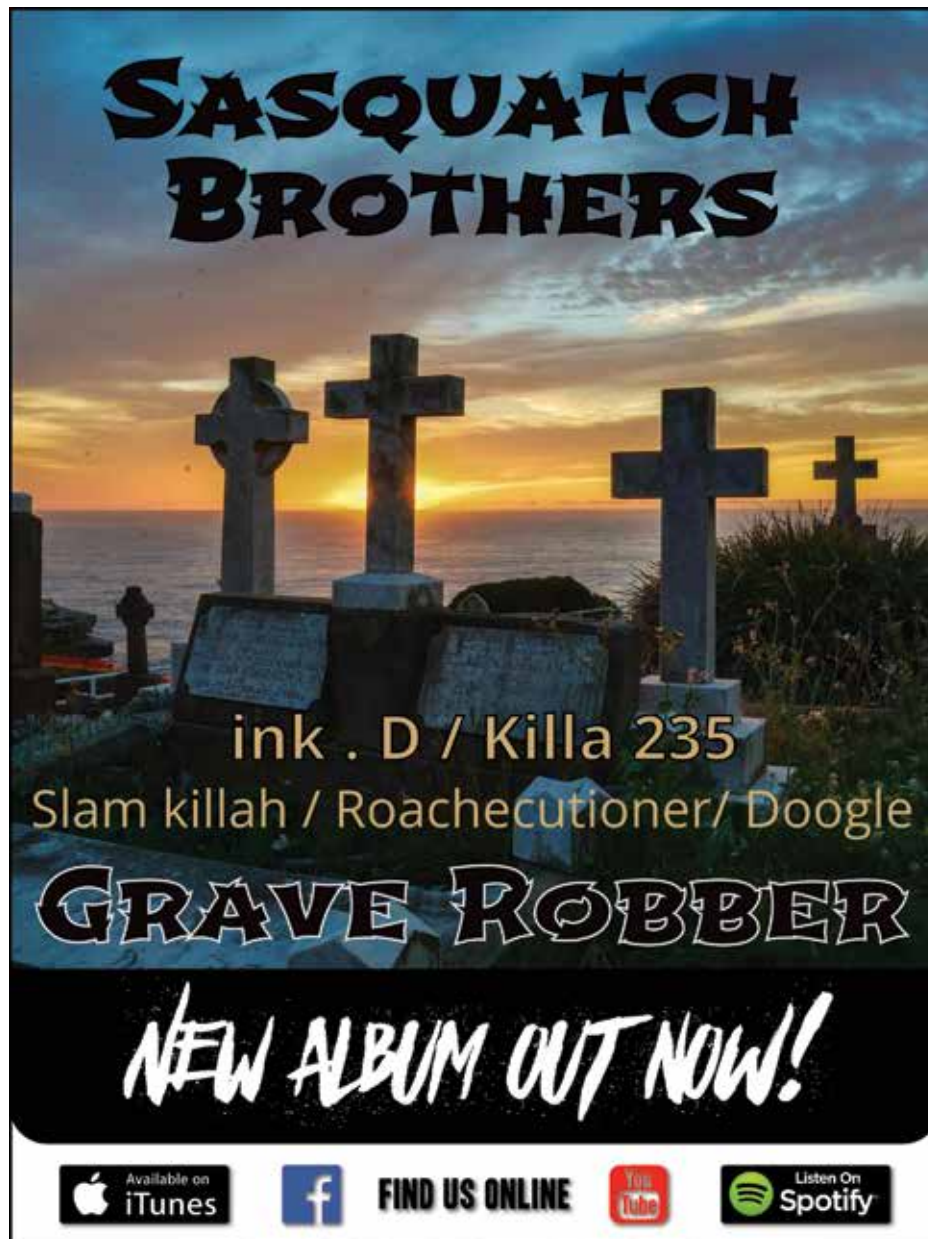
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Sled Island Top 10 of 2022

By Ryan Dyer

Sled Island is all about discovery and with its return in 2022, the amount of discoveries in relation to the festival were endless. It is truly a choose-your-own-adventure type of ordeal, and each person's experience at Sled Island will differ from everyone else. For my Sled Island path of 2022, I have picked my top ten highlights. Basically, check out these bands when you have the time, and if they come through your town, they are worth the price of admission.

Little Destroyer - Tuesday June 21 @ Commonwealth/Friday June 24 @ Pinbar

Vancouver's Little Destroyer played a big part in kicking off Sled Island the right way at the Commonwealth. Sled Island always needs a band with a front person who can go out and engage the crowd in an up close and personal way, and Little Destroyer are certainly that. On Friday, the band played a secret show at the Pinbar before the other bands took the stage. Only about 20 people were there watching them, though they still played it like there were 1000, with front-woman Allie wearing a custom made fringed jacket, which she tore off before dancing atop the bar as the little characters on the pinball machines looked on.

L.A. Witch - Wednesday June 22 @ Dickens

The first of many witch-themed or titled bands brought their incantations to Dickens on the first official night of Sled Island. Crystal Eyes, Ghost Woman and Dead Friends helped to ease the crowd into a false lull before the anti-saints from Los Angeles took the stage to further lull the crowd into a menacing vortex of rock n' roll with no return in sight.

Backxwash - Wednesday June 22 @ Commonwealth

"I met the devil in the moshpit" is what I heard when making my way into the Commonwealth. The moshpit was going hard, and within it the white, frizzy haired, face painted Backxwash was

slamming with the crowd. The energy for the Montreal-based rapper stayed at a peak level throughout this set, which featured one costume change and a welcome addition of "Black Sabbath" getting turned into a horrorcore track. The moshpit anthem made a second appearance as the show finale, with Backxwash leaving through the crowd as they continued to slam.

Vagina Witchcraft - Thursday June 23 @ Palomino

Vagina Witchcraft played twice - once opening for Mares of Thrace at Broken City (which I didn't attend due to being at L.A. Witch and then Backxwash and the next day playing at 8:00 PM (though the sun was still shining) at the Palomino. Sunshine or not, the Winnipeg-based band played a visceral, vicious, hair-raising, eye-brow raising set which could smoke meat if the kitchen at the Palomino were to shut down.

Woodhawk - Thursday June 23 @ Ship and Anchor

The organizers at Sled Island love two types of metal - stoner and doom. Why they don't acknowledge other metal genres such as black metal or death metal is up to anyone's guess, though the stoner and doom shows Sled Island throws are always legendary. This Ship show was no exception, with Calgary's Denimachine, Gone Cosmic and Woodhawk performing with Vancouver's Worse. Out of the



bands on this show, Woodhawk threatened to tear the roof off the most.

Bonnie Trash - Thursday June 23 @ Pinbar

As Worse, Woodhawk and Gone Cosmic played at the Ship and Anchor, something wicked was brewing at the Pinbar a block down the street. In between Woodhawk and Worse, Bonnie Trash, the band featuring twin sisters Emmalia and Sarafina Bortolon-Vettor played a droning, witchy, hazy and frankly cool-as-fuck set which came and went as suddenly as a supernatural encounter. If only the metalheads at the Ship walked two minutes down to the Pinbar to share this experience.

Wet Cigarette - Friday June 24 @ Pinbar

Those looking for something experimental or irreverent found their way to the Pinbar for much of Sled Island. The show on Friday was exceptional for the variety offered - Little Destroyer played a secret show firstly, then Stripmall, Brain Bent, Wet Cigarette and Uranium hit the small stage surrounded by vintage pinball machines. Victoria's Wet Cigarette stood out due to their absurd costumes and hilarious songs about BeyBlades and getting high and driving down the wrong highway lane. Life is a wet cigarette - it's limp, but better than sucking on nothing.

Frankie and the Witch Fingers - Friday June 24 @ Broken City

Did you notice how many bands this year had the word witch in their name? Conscious decision or not, things were really mystical at this year's Sled Island. Frankie and the Witch Fingers are from California, and their appearance caused Broken City to nearly break some more due to the amount of people squeezed inside. Also playing with the frenetic Frankie were Mahogany Frog and Holy Void. Frog were a stunning, astral journey of strings and synths and Void were a morbid force.

Primitive Man - Saturday June 25 @ Palomino

The *Absolute Underground* showcase at the Palomino on Saturday night featured a diverse collection of bands including Body Void, Jarhead Fertilizer, Mortiferum, Elizabeth Colour Wheel and of course the headliners, Primitive Man. At around 1:00 AM, as Body Void were igniting the main floor of the Palomino, Primitive Man were turning the downstairs into a pit of burning embers. It was a rumble in that little smokehouse with a show that satisfied fans looking for something crushingly heavy.

Lydia Lunch Retrovirus - Saturday June 25 @ Dickens

The ever outspoken no wave icon Lydia Lunch's appearance at Dickens was one for the record books. I unfortunately missed her documentary film screening the night before, but this concert made up for it in spades and glasses of white wine. The crowd was unglued, with many who might have had more than just a tiny taste of something letting loose. One would-be stage diver in a cop hat was met with a disproving Lunch - "I've never met a man I couldn't kill. And you're just a boy..." The crowd ate up all Lunch had to offer - praise, insults, jokes - Dickens was in her hands on this night. We were just there to witness it.





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THE EXORCIST'S HOUSE



Nick Roberts
Crystal Lake Publishing
May 6, 2022

I love it when a book completely surpasses my expectations.

When I was first asked to review this novel, my response was that I don't normally read fiction dealing with the demonic. I deal with that enough already in my own life.

However, sometimes a novel surprises me, and this one did. This gets about as close to the truth as you're going to get.

Nick Roberts is also a fabulous author. Not only did this entertain me, but the last quarter of the book actually scared me. I highly recommend.

Michael Cushing

Talisman," or maybe a more mature Disney.

What I found past that is a story that centers around colonialism and cultural misappropriation. A story about morals, about how you shouldn't do something just because 'you' can. And, that sometimes, when you really take a look at human history and you examine basic human nature, you don't really need to look outside of our own species to find the real monsters.

Michael Cushing

GROSS OUT



Duncan Ralston
Shadow Work Publishing
March 25, 2022

One of the biggest compliments that I could give this book is how unique it is.

This book tells the story of a horror convention that goes horribly wrong. It's composed of many different, fully realized characters whose main stories surrounding this year's Horror Con are broken up into many different substories.

This book straddles the line between splatterpunk / extreme horror and bizarre fiction. While this may not have been as "gross" as I preferred, what it did do right was entertain me. I never really knew what was going to come next. And it kept me laughing the whole time.

Michael Cushing

COLLECTING RAYNE VOLUME 1



Rayne Havok
Independently Published
January 10, 2022

Rayne Havok is a name that fans of extreme horror fiction, and those who like healthy doses of smut mixed in with their horror, should keep an eye on, and this is part of the reason why:

Featuring eight of her short stories from around 2020, this collection shows Havok's skill at setting a scene.

It doesn't matter if it's a slasher / torture scene, or a XXX rated smut scene, this woman has the skill to pull her into the scene that she's building, breaking taboos liberally across the board.

If you are already a fan of Rayne Havok, you may need to read this just to be complete. You've probably missed a story or two. If you are not acquainted yet with Rayne's work, this is a good place to start. At the beginning.

Michael Cushing

THE ENVIOUS NOTHING: A COLLECTION OF LITERARY RUIN



Curtis M Lawson
Hippocampus Press
June 15, 2022

I'm not even quite finished reading this collection and I'm already confidently giving it 5 stars.

Curtis has a gift that I really haven't seen very often. He can make me feel extreme emotions without going completely overboard with breaking taboos or the amount of gore, which is the sign of a true author.

Whether it was making me remember my darkest depressions with "You, Me, and the Envious Nothing," making me laugh at the absurdity of "Secrets of the Forbidden Kata," making me cry with "The Witch of Rock Hollow," or making me feel doom and gloom through a bizarre universe's version of Disneyland with "The Happiest Place on Earth."

The only negative that I would give it so far is that it's so damn good at turning my emotions to mush that I need a breather myself. And you would have to be seriously masochistic if you could just pick this one up and read it cover to cover.

Michael Cushing

WINTERSET HOLLOW



Jonathan Edward Durham
Credo House Publishers
September 1, 2021

I'm not usually a fan of Coming-of-Age Horror. This was a book that I wasn't expecting to enjoy, even after a friend suggested that I read it.

I had to read past the initial plot line of several friends visiting the property of an author whose book they grew up fondly admiring in order to pay homage, then realizing that the characters in their beloved novel were real. The story was just far different than they expected.

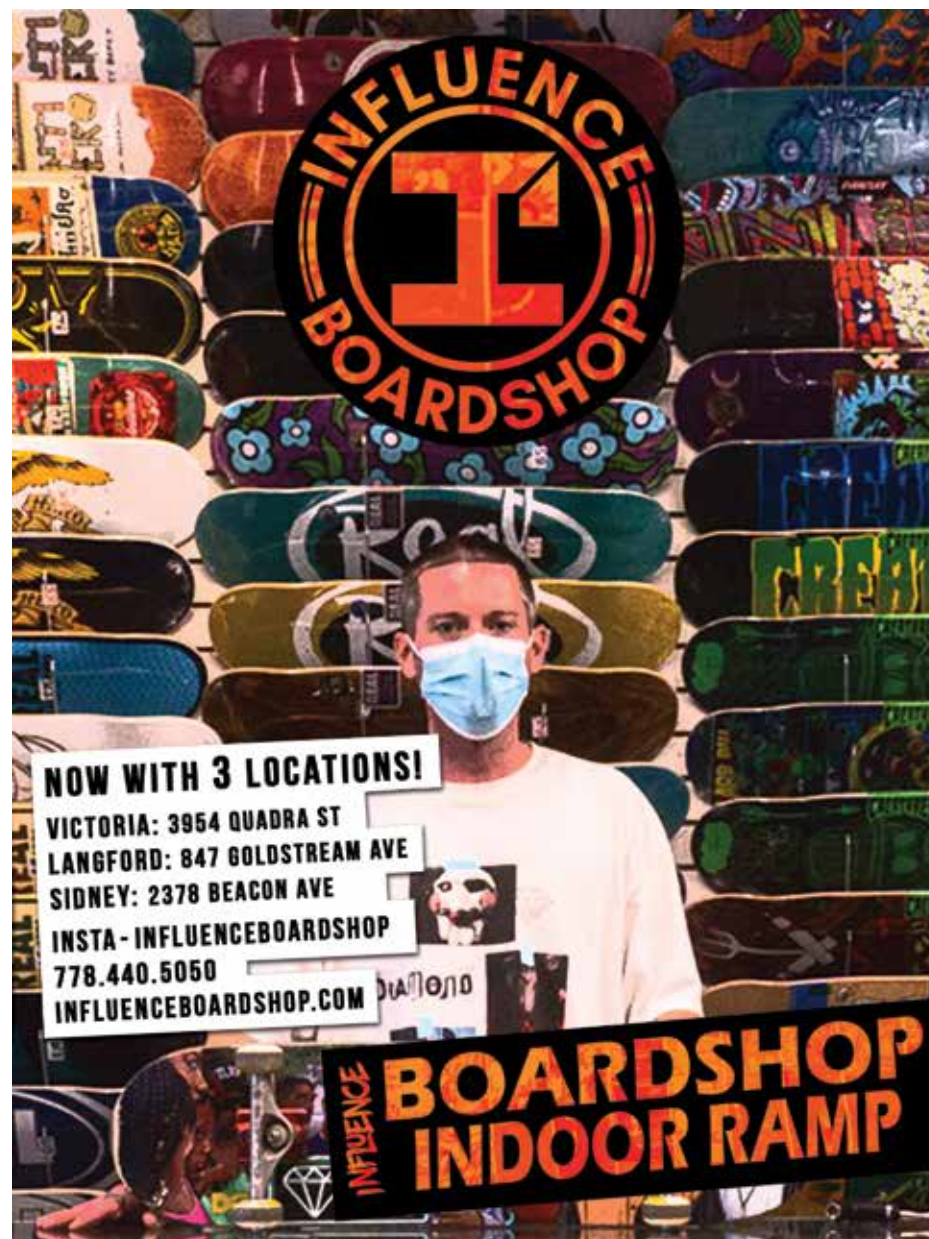
And I had to read past the first 120 pages or so, which read like a much better written "The

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Goldor Art - Hellish Hand Painted Canvases

Interview with William Muñoz
By Ryan Dyer

Since 2003, William Muñoz (Goldor) has been producing hand painted canvases for metal-minded patrons. Hailing from Santiago, Chile, but now residing in Calgary, Muñoz' work has been used by the likes of Napalm Death, Mayhem, Pentagram and Destroyer 666. With his new store recently having its grand opening at the New Horizon Mall, we catch up with Muñoz to talk about what he offers and his influences.

Absolute Underground: First could you please introduce yourself and what you do:

WM: I am Goldor, a visual artist and musician from Santiago, Chile and I moved to Calgary, Alberta, Canada at the beginning of this year

AU: You just opened your store at New Horizon Mall in Calgary. How was the big opening?

WM: It was pretty good. We had people from Calgary and the surrounding communities come check it out. The reaction from the community has been very welcoming to having this kind of store in the city.

AU: What items are you selling at the store?

WM: We try to have everything related to metalheads and extreme music, from CDs and vinyl to accessories like patches, back patches, metal pins, belt buckles, hand painted t-shirts, hand painted canvases and jewelry.

AU: How long have you been doing hand

painted canvases/when did you start painting?

WM: I have been painting logos on canvas for bands since 2003. I started in Santiago, Chile, where I was born and raised and after a couple of years my work was well known in the metal scenes around the world. Some of my customers included Mayhem (NOR), Napalm Death (ENG), Nifelheim (SWE), Sadistic Intent (USA), Avulsed (SPA), Pentagram (CHL), The Covenant Festival (CAN), Destroyer 666 (AUS), Mercyleless (FRA), Purgatory (GER), Derketa (USA), Pentacle (HOL), Acheron (USA), Ved Buens Ende (NOR), Vomitory (SWE), Unnaussprechlichen Kulturen (CHL) and many others! (Check my wall on Facebook).

AU: What was the first logo you remember painting?

WM: It was for my own band, a project that I was working on in 2003 called Azael. After looking around I wanted something unique and special.

AU: It looks like your canvases can be pretty big - big enough to be stage backdrops. Do you have any limitations when it comes to size?

WM: No limitations at all, I can paint for any types of scenarios and for any kind of band. Obviously the complexity of big backdrops is reflected in the time that it takes to finish it and the cost.

AU: What are some of your personal favorite bands?

WM: I don't limit myself to one style of music but some of my favorites bands are Slayer, Deicide, Death, Morbid Angel, Immolation, Sadus, King Diamond, Autopsy, Dismember, Dissection, Portal, Emperor, Mayhem, Deathspell Omega and many others.

AU: Do you also design

BUSINESS PROFILE

original logos for bands?

WM: Yes, of course I have and can do it. The process consists of them sending me reference logos and concepts and then we start working with a few sketches until we agree on a final design.

AU: Aside from metal music, I see you also do some horror stuff - Billy the puppet from SAW, Pinhead, Chucky, etc.

What else is in your realm of interests?

WM: I really enjoy extreme pieces of art, canvas, sculptures, horror movies and fantasy horror books.

AU: Black and white seems to be your forte - which is seen in a lot of black metal logos and imagery. What do you think is the most aesthetically appealing band logo?

WM: According to the style of music of each band is what is predominant in their logos and backdrops - for example death/grind bands are dirty and bloody, black metal bands are more into gothic art, heavy metal bands include a more metallic design, but each band is always looking for originality. For my particular vision, I find that every design has something likeable and I am willing to work with a wide variety of designs and aesthetics.

AU: Could you tell us about the scene in Chile? Which are the most badass underground bands in the country?

WM: Metal music in Chile is very appreciated - we are a small country but with big metropolises and big concerts in well recognized venues. Artists



really like to play to the Chilean public for their enthusiasm and the mosh pits are the most brutal you'll see.

The Chilean scene at this time is very strong, especially in the death, thrash and black metal scenes. From the classics like Pentagram, Atomic Aggressor, Apostasy and Cancerbero to the

newer ones like Force of Darkness, Slaughtbath, Godless, Dominus, Wildes Heer, Praise the Flame, Horrifying, Inanna, Defacing, Ancient Crypts and many more.

AU: What bands do you play in?

WM: I have played in many projects throughout my life and right now I am the bass player in Unnaussprechlichen Kulturen (occult death metal) and Henosis (extreme black metal). Both are Chilean bands and in addition to those, I am also working on a personal project here in Canada called Insorcist.

AU: Anything else to add?

WM: Lastly, I want to thank the people of Calgary and the surrounding areas for being so welcoming and Absolute Underground for this interview. Please support local businesses.

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The Best Frights Are At Fantasia Film Festival 2022! Wrap-Up and Highlights

By Ed Sum

Montreal's Fantasia Film Festival 2022 is a wrap! And everything that I've been able to see and watch from this event has been terrific. I'm sure there was a slow film or two, but in my list of what to see first and foremost, and what I could catch for the second time made up my schedule. On my itinerary were animated works first, horror films second and fantasy third. Some were mixed genres, and that was a blessing in disguise!

This year marked this event's return to form. It was an in-person event rather than digital, and the organisers weren't enforcing a mask mandate. People are tired of the pandemic, and with some restrictions eased, the event lets the avid movie-goer decide for themselves if it's needed or not.

Of the animated works I saw, *The Girl From the Other Side* stands out as perhaps the most scary of them all. A

world has been divided into two because of a curse; and one kingdom lives in perpetual darkness, transformed into hairy mutants (if they can be called that), whilst another lives in fear of catching it. The darkness is all consuming. The woods are as foreboding as a Brothers Grimm tale, and as for whether all its denizens are all evil, I'm glad not everyone is. The creatures, however, may well be the eyes and ears of an

evil force that wants to consume the souls of the living. As for why that's important, we don't quite know.

Other pieces include *Inu-Oh*, which is very rock and roll—about a Japanese version of the monster of Notre Dame teaming up with a blind musician to provide entertainment in feudal Japan—and *Demigod: The Legend Begins*. The former delivers a lot of terrific tracks to fans of fusion, and the latter brings puppet theatre to wonderful life. This story about a human who doesn't want this status shows that he must if he's to survive. Or rather, redeem himself as he's blamed for the death of an emperor!

On the horror genre front, there are many works to take note of. The highlight is definitely *The Breach*. This movie directed by Rodrigo Gudiño slowly builds upon the horror in slow, measured ways. Here, Sheriff John

Hawkins (Allan Hawco) must investigate one last case before he can leave the Yukon. When

a mangled body washes up on the shores of the Porcupine River, he'll have to track down where it came from, and put a stop to a mad doctor's experiments. The bits I enjoyed concern what this scientist is trying to unlock, and it's deadly! Although the monsters looked generic from a distance, I'm glad there were some closeups to show what kinds of genetic manipulation were taking place!

However, I was more keen on checking out the classics. It's tough to say as a horror fan, I've seen it all. The films from Europe are often unique, and their output is just as huge. Grzegorz Warchol's *I Like Bats* stands out as a unique take on the vampire legend. Here, Izabela (Katarzyna Walter) just wants to live her life. But when a mortal tries to win her love, and she tires of this existence, it's tough to say if their partnership will last. There's more character drama than blood in this

piece, but this examination of the vampire and human condition is the heart of this work.

On the comedy front, *Cult Hero* is simply hilarious! This movie is about the life and times of a (former) TV celebrity, Dale Domazar. Ry Barrett is perfect in the role of a has-been television show host cum private investigator. He used to be the star of a television show called *Cult Busters*, and as the name implies, it's about him breaking up ominous cults. But after the last broadcast resulted in a mass suicide, that can ruin one's reputation easily. However, he believes he can get his mojo back. When Kallie Jones (Liv Collins) hires him to rescue her husband, and she's one of those Karen types, the laughs cannot get any more surreal. Since she's the side-kick, will she listen to Domazar? This



horror comedy is off the rails for that, and when she has a rival who gets involved in the cult shenanigans, this woman is even more invested to dole out perhaps some revenge too. To say anymore would be bad, but I highly recommend this Canadian gem.

Dreadstream is a must because it's a satire on *The Blair Witch Project*, but when it turned into *Evil Dead*, I just had to chuckle. This horror comedy is better than another film I saw, *A Town Full of Ghosts*, where it concerns another vlogger trying to win viewers. This review can be found on my blog, otakunoculture.com, for those curious.

But as for movies that win the "best movie made during a pandemic" is *The Harbinger*. Anyone familiar with Andy Mitton's *The Witch in the Window* will be in for a treat. His latest piece subverts the "I am haunted" trope, and what we are watching is this writer/director's commentary on what society has become because we're facing uncertainty with and if the COVID-19 pandemic will end. Here, Monique (Gabby Beans) leaves the comfort of her own bubble to help Mavis (Emily Davis). She's being tormented by waking nightmares, and if that's not enough, everyone in her apartment is having the exact same dream! There's no need to say more, but this subversive horror has a lot to like, since it's a commentary on the global situation had the pandemic been much worse!

Two other works which deserve honourable mention include Nico Van den Brink's *Moloch*, Mali Elfman's *Next Exit* and (Presented by The Film Society of Montreal) *The Poe Morgue: A Journey Into Fear With Film, Music, and Theatre*—which, as the name implies, is a documentary that looks at the influence this master of the macabre has in all entertainment mediums. This work is the perfect way to cap off Fantasia.



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Hell Fire

Interview by Sheldon Byer

Absolute Underground:
Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Hell Fire: Jake here. I'm like a young Obi Wan but uglier. Tony and I've got San Francisco's biggest collection of Marshall amps.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

J: Tony, Mike, Kai, and Jake. We like to make music and act like degenerates. The recorded public version of the band everyone has grown to know has been going since 2015. Tony formed Hell Fire in the spring of 2010 with a revolving door of members coming and going until Tony, Jake and Mike linked up. Then the band really started getting on track.

AU: Are you guys massively popular now because of Stranger Things?

J: Yes. We're actually gonna tour with Metallica now. Co-headlining of course. Kids on TikTok seem to think we were birthed from the show or vice versa when they find out we've been around for a decade.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible?

J: We're kind of like if you went somewhere in the early eighties, threw Metallica and Maiden in a cage and made them fight while Ronnie James Dio and Macho Man Randy Savage did the commentating. Just heavy metal I guess. Oh, and Tesla. We're basically just Tesla.

AU: Tell us about your new album (out on August 12th) *Reckoning*.

J: The album has all the best elements of our sound. It's got the heaviest songs we've done, the most melodic, even the most mellow stuff we've done. During Covid we focused on practicing and recording demos, by the time we got to record we already knew what we wanted to accomplish. It's our fourth record but it feels fresh, it's the first one where we made sure we did everything we wanted.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?
J: I like them all for different reasons but I think the title track "Reckoning," "It Ends Tonight," and "Addicted to Violence," are a good representation of what the record is. Now that I've sat with it awhile, I really like the closing tracks too, "A Dying Moon" and "The Executioner." It really depends on my mood. Looking at the new track listing is like staring at a Waffle House menu at 3am. How drunk and hungry are you and what are you willing to devour?

AU: You're about to embark on a North American tour with Screamer with a handful of Western Canadian dates. What are you looking

forward to being back in Canada?

J: We love Canada. The venues we've played are great, the people are great. Plus it's not the middle of the winter this time so that's pretty lavish. Since our last full run through Canada in 2019 we've had so much support come from the country. So we can't wait to finally be back to play some shows out there, hoping we can get back to the East side of Canada soon as well.

AU: Is it true that you once had to kidnap a Canadian to get your through the Rocky Mountains in the dead of winter?

J: Yes, but that hunk got Stockholm syndrome and joined our cult after all. We're glad we had a Canadian guide though, if we didn't we may still be up in the Rockies all frozen up like prehistoric mammoths.

AU: What are your favourite Canadian bands?

J: Well the obvious ones of course, you know. Rush, Triumph, Voivod, Carly Rae Jepsen. But no, I loved 3 Inches Of Blood. The album *Advance and Vanquish* was such great record. Saw them live a couple times back home but they broke up soon after I think. There's a MAGIC POWER in my bones and I'm ready to LAY IT ON THE LINE. Me and the boys are HERE TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT and FOLLOW OUR HEARTS. So yeah Triumph!

AU: You guys are heavily ingrained in the Bay Area Metal Scene that dates back to Thrash explosion in the 80s. What's that been like and what doors has it opened for you?

J: We all grew up with this stuff and the amount of shows we had access too at an early age were crazy. Seeing bands like Exodus, Testament, Death Angel, and Sadus up close definitely motivated us to practice and work at this thing way harder. The Bay Area is certainly in our blood. It's great coming from a place with such a rich history of heavy metal. It's like having a home football team to root for. When we started putting out more records, hitting the road a ton and really putting all the hard work. A lot of those bands we looked up to as kids started to notice and definitely helped us out when they've been able to. Exodus and Death Angel especially have had us on multiple shows and tours along with our buds Matt and Lars from Rancid. It's a great community out here.

AU: Where do you guys draw your biggest influence from that directly impact Hell Fire's sound?

J: Like the last question I think all of us definitely have the Bay Area engrained in us, so there is always a foundation of thrash and classic metal. I love all types of music no matter how unmetal it is sometimes, and I'm really trying to just trying to write good songs. You know, like Eddie Money.

BENEATH THE WHEEL

AU: What can we expect from the upcoming tour?

J: The works. Loud noises, fun past your bedtime, old songs, new songs, maybe a cover or two, and plenty of chest hair. It's the best damn heavy metal show you'll be able to remember. We'll be in your face, discharging energy and taking ya for a ride.

AU: Is the singer of Screamer shitting himself because Jake is the true screamer?

J: Haha na mate. And if anyone does end up shitting themselves it better be outside of the van. Lookin' at you _____. You know who you are.

AU: What's the heavy metal capital for Hell Fire?

J: Anywhere there's a stage some cool buds and good times.

AU: Best new bands you've been able to play with or have caught in recent memory. Ones our readers may not know about?

J: The band Nite. We just played with them in SF and they have a new record out, melodic classic metal with harsh vocals. It's good stuff. Vorlust is a new band in the Bay we have yet to play with, they fucking rip. Hella heavy. Tower out of New York. Also... Roadrash. You heard of those guys? We've also been really digging our label mates Early Moods from LA. They have a new record coming out soon as well. Some others recently are Gygax, Space Vacation and of course our friends Charger.

AU: I clogged my toilet. Who can help?

J: Tony the toilet man. That's his professional alias. But he's off plumbing duties on tour, sorry bud.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

J: We've got a lot planned for this new record. We're starting to get our touring plans for next year all booked out, looked to hit Europe for sure once and maybe twice next year. We have some other videos & surprises coming your way as well with featured songs from the new record.

AU: Any final words for our readers? Especially our Western Canadian bangers who are going to see you.

J: Can't wait to see all your beautiful faces and shred together again. This will be a tour for the ages and I'm ready to consume offensive amounts of poutine and Tim Hortons. Great white north, we will see you soon!

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



TRIUMPH - Part 2

**Triumph with Angel City at Vancouver Coliseum
March 16, 1985**

Let's blast back to the past for an evening with Triumph...

The years 1978 to 1985 were formative and Triumph was a household name in my hometown. Our family was from Toronto too but we ended up on Vancouver Island in 1978. I entered grade 6 and took music classes. At home my stereo was my favourite thing. In spring '79 a radio concert ad came on for Triumph in concert and "Lay It On The Line" was the song that blew out of my speakers. I was instantly hooked on this group. Sadly, I missed the concert at our local arena. The concert was in fact a show stopper and remains legendary as the show ended with the curtain catching on fire and going up in flames leaving a smoke filled arena instead of an encore!

As the years went by Triumph continued to put out record after record. *Allied Forces* came in grade 9 and I was hooked. In 1983 (Gr.10) came *Never Surrender*. In 83, our school band was in California that May, the very month Triumph played the US Festival. We all wanted to remain there to try to go but instead flew back to Victoria. Shucks. Then I entered grade 12 in 1984 and Triumph released *Thunder Seven*, a stellar LP produced by Eddie Kramer, who was famous for recording Jimi

Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Kiss and The Rolling Stones too. Then it was announced they were coming to Vancouver and the show was on a Saturday. I asked a friend who had a car if he would make the venture with me to the mainland to see the show and he said "Hell Yeah!" We took the ferry to the mainland on show day to live our Rock and Roll dreams. "Follow Your Heart" was the new radio single and video. The tour had 17 dates across Canada and I was finally going to experience the band live in concert.

Once we made it to the Coliseum, thousands of eager concert goers ventured inside. I bought the new tour book as a souvenir and we made it to our seats.

The arena was packed as openers Angel City (from Australia) took the stage. I remember a solid performance with their radio hit "Marseilles" being the highlight of their show.

Now it was time for the headlining act that was Triumph. This Toronto trio had made its mark by proving themselves as a top notch act. They incorporated the spectacle of lighting and pyrotechnics aplenty with a dazzling display of lasers and computer animation on screens and top notch staging to go along with their incredible musicianship. They had made it to the top of their game and were as big at this time as Van Halen or the Scorpions. They pretty much stole the show at the 1983 US Festival on Heavy Metal day in California and did it without leather and studs only to win over the crowd with their positive energy and skill that was their music. They had the power and also the magic. And now here I was with my buddy awaiting the moment to experience Triumph.

I remember getting stage left tickets close to the stage on the lower level and what a perfect view we had. The lights went down and I felt like I was in the musical stratosphere of an electric solar system with all the starry like flickering of lighters in the audience. The stage behind the curtain was glowing dark and ominous. Then

the moment came for the Introduction of "Alright Vancouver, Please welcome from Toronto, RCA recording artists ...TRIUMPH! The curtain dropped and they opened with none other than "When The Lights Go Down" a stellar track sung by Gil Moore as he played his massive drum kit. They then immediately went into their biggest hit to date, the unforgettable "Magic Power" and oh boy was the audience in for a show. Rik Emmett played his guitar and sang it amazingly except for one other thing... he had 15,000 of us all singing along with him. It felt like heaven on earth was plugged in and the magic was indeed in the smog filled air. Everything they played that night had the crowd on its feet or transfixed to Triumph's hypnotic tracks. These guys had an intrinsic balance between themselves and it's no wonder millions of that generation caught on to them.

Other highlights from the show for me were the solo instrumental from the new LP called *Midsummer's Daydream* which then went into the radio hit "Hold On" and when the band rejoined Rik on other tracks like "World of Fantasy" and "Spellbound" they kept us in awe. There were also highlights like when Gil played a drum solo immersed in flowing smog and bright lights going along to his rhythms, or when Rik Emmett played an incredible guitar solo during the renowned "Rock and Roll Machine" and the lighting rigs lowered and played along with him. He even played the theme from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and it was blissful to be in that crowd. The show was well over 90 minutes and eventually the lasers and animation along with explosions and lights eventually fell to darkness as the band left the stage and everyone cheered as long and loud as we could hoping they would

return for an encore. Triumph returned with their first radio hit; a cover of Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way". Then, what better for a final song than the one and only "Fight The Good Fight" from the *Allied Forces* record to end the show. It is also my personal favourite song from Triumph as the message remains so true in so many ways. It was a fantastic concert through and through and I'm very glad I saw them at their height of popularity. A fond memory indeed. The vibe of the show left us all aglow and it made for a special memory too of my final daze of high school.

With that we come to the end of another edition where I always use the line 'Rock Out and Roll On' as my final line until next time, yet this time I'll reveal where that comes from. There is a great song

from *Thunder Seven* entitled "Rock Out, Roll On" and I'll end this issue with a lyric from that song. The ghosts of Woodstock still haunt the next of kin

But the screams and shouts have turned to whispers on the wind

The time has come to face the music again
Back 'em up against the wall and bring the hammer down

Tell 'em that was then, my friend, but this is here and now.

Rock Out, Roll On

Rock out we've waited so long.

Rock Out, Roll On we keep holding on

We've waited so long we've got to be strong

We'll just keep holdin' on.

Until the next issue... Hold onto your dreams.

Rock Out and Roll On

- Clark 'Super' Mantei



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U.K. SUBS

Interview with songwriter/bassist and author Alvin Gibbs – Part 2

by Ira "Warhead" Hunter and Dustin "Rock N Roll Savage" Jak

Transcribed by Sheldon "Road Rash" Byer

AU: Did you think that punk would still be such a big thing 45 years later?

Alvin Gibbs: I hoped that these principles of punk would still be alive and well. In the early days it was dangerous to be a punk. I got jumped by a bunch of Teddy Boys in the street market in Croydon because I was a punk. They tried to kick my head in. Luckily, a couple of people that worked in the market came to my assistance. I knew that people were being knifed and being killed because they

were punks. Heavy metal people, bikers, skinheads, Teddy Boys, everyone hated the punks. Now, it's become so absorbed in our culture and so much a part of it. I really still love it and I think now punk rock is so much more enjoyable to be in a punk band and to play and to do these festivals because it's no longer dangerous. You're no longer worried about your personal safety anymore, and people are chilled out about it. I can get on a plane without being thrown off. As would have possibly happened back in 1977-1978.

AU: What are the principles of punk that you mentioned?

AG: Everyone's got their own interpretation. It always makes me angry when people on social media start saying that "It's not punk rock, don't call that punk rock." Where is this book of punk rock rules? I thought the whole point was we didn't have rules. If you look at the early beginnings of punk and go back to '76 and '77, and you look at those bands, they're all so diverged and they all dress differently. I mean, Siouxsie and the Banshees look

different from The Clash. The Clash looked as different to the Buzzcocks as the Buzzcocks did to the Sex Pistols, they're all very different. That's what was great about it, but somewhere around about 1983/1984 it all sort of ended up being

about having a mohawk haircut and dressing a certain way and that's a shame. My personal definition of what punk stands for is self-sufficiency and being able to express myself in a way that's not standardized or expected. I put out a solo record with my band The Disobedient Servants a couple of years back and it's a sort of mixture of all my influences. Some people, I call them the punk rock Taliban, go "That's not a punk record,

you haven't got a lot of really fast aggressive stuff on there." That doesn't mean it's not punk rock, it just means that I'm expressing myself

now as a man in his late 50s. The principles are still there, the attitude is still there in the playing. The punk attitude is the way you play and the way you express yourself. I find these "That's not punk people" to be anti-punk actually, it is the antithesis of punk.

AU: Would you say you got involved in music for the sex, the drugs, or the Rock and Roll?

AG: It's just being a show off and having a forum in which to show off. You're educated by being in a band and travelling. I've learned about so many things, wine, food, the history of different countries and cultures. It's been more than just sex, drugs and Rock'n'Roll. But yes, sex, drugs and Rock'n'Roll are all very good indeed.

AU: Do you like your singer Charlie Harper's art? His cat paintings?

AG: Dogs are more to my liking! I like Charlie so I appreciate it. It's fun and people really love it. They send in pictures of their cats so that he can do portraits of them. Gaye Advert, bassist of The Adverts, does the artwork from my solo band Alvin Gibbs & The Disobedient Servants. Her artwork is more to my taste.

AU: Do you have any kids or are you married?

AG: That's one of the trade-offs for doing what I do. I've been divorced twice. Had a couple hundred girlfriends. It's very difficult to maintain a relationship doing what I do. Your partner assumes that certain things are going on, even if they're not going on. But I have a steady lady now. Children, I couldn't stand the idea of having



kids and just leaving the mother literally holding the baby while we're out gallivanting and playing music, that just would be wrong.

AU: Anything else to promote?

AG: Check out my book *Diminished Responsibility: My life as a U.K. Sub & Other Strange Stories* by Alvin Gibbs available to buy from Tome & Metre Publishing. Plus the new U.K. Subs single "Sensei" is out on Cleopatra Records.

AU: Final words for Canadians?

AG: I would very much like to play for you lovely Canadians again. I do very much love the country and playing over there. It would be fantastic and the U.K. Subs will make it back somehow even though we are getting up there in terms of our ages now. Charlie is going to be 78 this coming year.

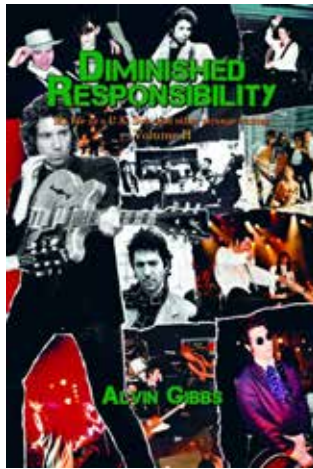
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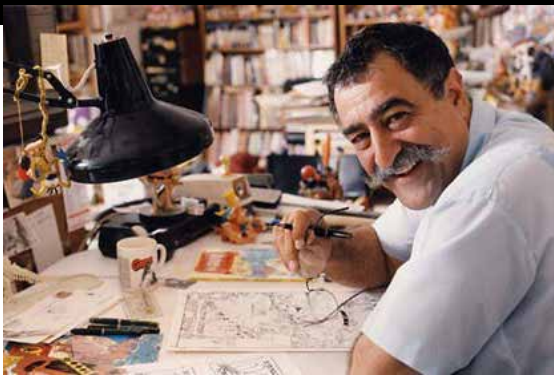
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COMIC BOOK ICONS



Sergio Aragonés - Part 4

Absolute Underground: Groo's dog is named Rufferto. What would the name of his cat be if he had one?

Sergio: Umm... I've never thought about it. Rufferto was my dog, a Queensland Heeler, I had for many years. One of the reasons Rufferto first appeared was because with Groo walking alone he was thinking all the time. But if he was so stupid we needed some counterpart to think logically for him to break that train of thought. Groo could not be walking along by himself being that dumb. At first I thought I would use a human, but I couldn't because Groo would become a second banana or kill that guy in the first issue.

So it had to be an animal. At first I thought of a big massive Mastiff dog. But then you have two big idiots then. So then I thought of Laurel and Hardy. You have the smart one and the dumb one. So Rufferto had to be a smart dog. I started drawing dogs and I looked at my feet and there's my dog and said "There he is." His name was Ruffus, so I just changed a few things and called him Rufferto. I also have cats. We have always liked cats. The one that we have right now, his name is Guapo.

He is a handsome one, a beautiful cat but he's kind of savage. So you have to be careful with him. But I will have to think of a fun name or maybe the name of Groo's cat would be Guapo.

AU: I've been told that you have been to Victoria, BC, at least four times. Other than conventions and book signings, what brought you here?

Sergio: I think the first time I was just driving North and went all the way up to Vancouver Island. It is a beautiful place and I fell in love with Victoria. From the hotel we stayed in we could see those little seaplanes landing day and night. One thing that I love, which I discovered there for the first time was, tea time. When you go to have tea with these little pastries. That was great. They have a lovely Chinatown too and the people are wonderful. They have beautiful gardens and I love the sea, I love boats. So I've been there for conventions, I've been for book signings and I've been just as a tourist.

AU: You have lived a very adventuresome life and you have chronicled some of it in your

autobiographical comics. Are there still some stories from your past that you want to share?

Sergio: Millions of them. I've been writing them down because I want to do a memoir. As a cartoonist I love to travel and my father was in the movie industry. I had a friend who made documentaries and with him I went to Antarctica, I went to Bhutan in the Himalayas, and South Africa. It is easier for me to mention the countries that I haven't been to rather than the ones I have. I've been all over the world and I've done a lot of things. I've done television, I've done movies and

books, everything. This is just a freelance life. I have been very fortunate not only that I found love, I have a daughter, which is terrific. Everything is just great. I'm very fortunate man and I've got stories to tell.

AU: When taking commissions for your artwork, what is the craziest thing someone has asked you to draw for them?

Sergio: A gentleman wanted me to draw Groo in the world of art. He wanted me to do Groo and the melting clocks of Salvador Dali. I told him that I couldn't do that because Groo will be an anachronism as he doesn't

know what watches are, so I could not do it. I suggested maybe Groo in the world of Hieronymus Bosch, a 15th century painter, who was just amazing. So I did a piece for him of Groo in the world of Hieronymus Bosch with all these crazy things. I used all the elements that were part of the Groo world. People with swords, animals fighting, everything that had to do with fighting. So it came out pretty good.

AU: That sounds wicked, like Groo goes to Hell.

Sergio: Yes, he's been there too. Groo goes there and he rescues all the souls. I did these stories where all the gods are bragging about

how they were the best. The god in Groo's world decides that his hero is a guy called Arcadio, but Groo goes instead and screws up everything. It was a good series, there were four comics.

AU: We've recently had Elvira: Mistress of the Dark on the cover of the magazine. I'm just wondering, have you ever drawn Elvira?

Sergio: No, but I have drawn the new guy, they throw chickens at him.

AU: Svengoolie?

Sergio: Yes, Svengoolie. I did a two pager of a comic book convention and I put him in there working at the convention. He liked it. He showed it on his show.

AU: What is your average output for comic pages in a day?

Sergio: Well, don't forget that what I draw is not exactly like what Joe Kubert does or some of those guys. When a guy draws a serious comic,

he has to draw in perfect proportion, a perfect hand, a perfect expression, because if not it's a bad drawing. With Groo it doesn't make a difference if I just put four sausages as fingers, nobody notices the difference. So that style allows for speed drawing. But I do many things, I had to write Mad and draw Mad. Then I had to think Groo

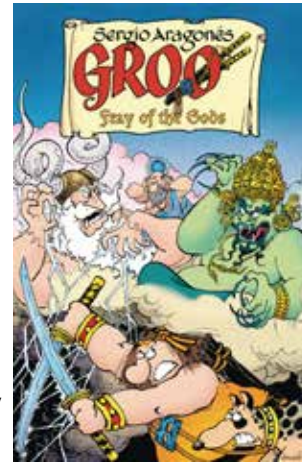
and draw Groo. Sometimes I had to travel or I had to be on television or whatever. So I have to do at least a page a day no matter what. But I can do two very comfortably.

AU: Your art was featured in a cool graphic novel for the Ramones. What kind of music do you like? Do you like punk rock?

Sergio: No, sadly I'm another generation. When I work, I have classical music when I'm thinking because it doesn't distract me, for my writing. When I'm inking, I love jazz. Because I grew up with it. Modern music contrasts with my work. I couldn't listen to it and work at the same time. That's the only time I listen to music, when I'm working.

AU: Have you ever done any artwork for an album or the cover of a CD?

Sergio: I did for a Mexican rock and roll band. They were fans and they came to California. I did the whole cover for the record and some promotional things. But I don't usually do advertising or illustrations either because there's



no gag in it. I'm not an illustrator. I'm not an artist in that way. I'm a cartoonist. I'm a storyteller that draws his own stories. That's what I am.

AU: You've come up with so many gags and jokes over your career. What is the secret for still making new jokes?

Sergio: Well, I think it has to do with the brain. If I think of an idea or joke and I don't write it down immediately, within an hour or less I cannot think of it anymore. Ever. It will never come back to my brain again. I think my brain, like every brain I guess, has orders not to repeat. I don't know

how that works. But I have to write down new gags immediately.

AU: Is there still a dream project that you want to do one day?

Sergio: Well, I like the classics. I would like to draw Don Quixote for instance. That would be a very good thing. I love old classic stories. But everything that you want to do has to have a reason to be done. That reason is the fans and the people who read you. Sadly, it's a new generation that is slowly getting away from me and my thoughts. I am 85 and things are not the same. I cannot relate to some modern things and a lot of mentalities have changed.

To Be Continued Next Issue...

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Comic-Geddon Spotlight on Z2 Comics Upcoming Releases

By Ed Sum

Z2 Comics has a huge slate of graphic novels coming up which connects musicians with this medium. Whether that's to tell part of their story in this sequential art form or to realise an upcoming album, readers have a lot to look forward to. *Dee Snider: He's Not Gonna Take It* and also *Halestorm: Hyde Manor* are two upcoming releases to look forward to.

From the press release: recently announced is *Nothing More: Spirits Vol. 1*, a graphic novel that will dive deeper into the mystical narrative behind the band's upcoming LP of the same name, due October 14th via Better Noise Music. Writer Dan Watters (Lucifer, Sword of Azrael, King Diamond's *Abigail*) and artist Christian Rosado join the band for a story that ignites in 1952 and spans decades, driven by four disparate souls as their spirit selves search for greater purpose. Their trajectories will

weave through continents and neighbouring lives, building off Nothing More's arcanic *Spirits Test* and *Spirit Types*—an original system developed by lead singer Jonny Hawkins.

"The comic book focuses on four of the Spirit Types. As we were making the album, I came up with the concept for the Spirits Test. Imagine if the zodiac had a baby with the Myers-Briggs personality test, and that baby came out fascinated by cryptic iconography and metal music... that is this test," Hawkins explains. "Each of us has a Spirit Type and this comic book is an artistic expression of how those Spirit Types come to life in a world very much like our own."

Guitarist Mark Vollelunga proposed a deeper exploration to be revealed in the comic, debuting in

late winter 2023.

"I set forth on this collaboration with Z2 Comics, and our manager, Will Hoffman, with the idea to expand the Nothing More world and elaborate on what these Spirit Types mean; where they came from and why they exist. We wanted to

write stories that invoke a sense of empathy and wonder, while maintaining a personal connection to Nothing More songs," Vollelunga continues.

"Dan Watters is such a brilliant, captivating writer. Both of us shared inspiration from shows like *The OA* and *Sense8*; we wanted to accentuate the differences people express when something wrecks you... and even though these differences may seem polarising, we still need each other. These differences force us to survive and grow. This story shows that great strength and mutual respect come to those who learn how to embrace one another."

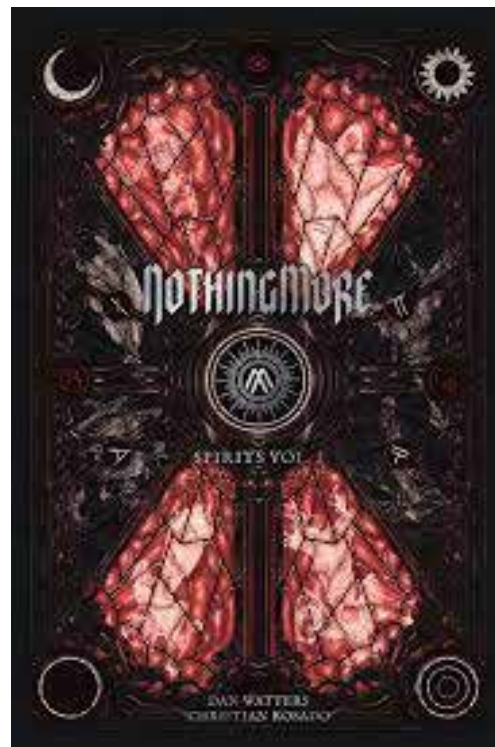
Started in 2003 by Hawkins and Vollelunga in San Antonio, Texas, Nothing More has ascended to be one of the most respected hard rock outfits touring today, merging careening melodies with dynamic arrangements and pounding rhythms. Their 2017 breakthrough LP *The Stories We Tell Ourselves* garnered three Grammy nominations, cementing the group as one of the most ambitious and

COMIC-GEDDON

honed bands in their genre and beyond. The group will embark on a national tour from August to October alongside In This Moment.

"Nothing More's songs have consistently challenged their audience to refuse a passive approach as they navigate life," *Spirits Vol. 1* editor Rantz Hoseley says. "Songs like 'Tired of Winning' dare the listener to not simply accept the life they are told awaits them, and to question assumptions fed to them by the powers that be. That outlook served as the backbone running through the core of the graphic novel. It's a vital element that influenced every aspect of developing this book with the band, making it such a rewarding experience where we've all pushed

each other to not simply create a 'comic book,' but to conjure a new mythos that, like the new album and the *Spirits Test*, can inspire the audience to become the best versions of themselves."



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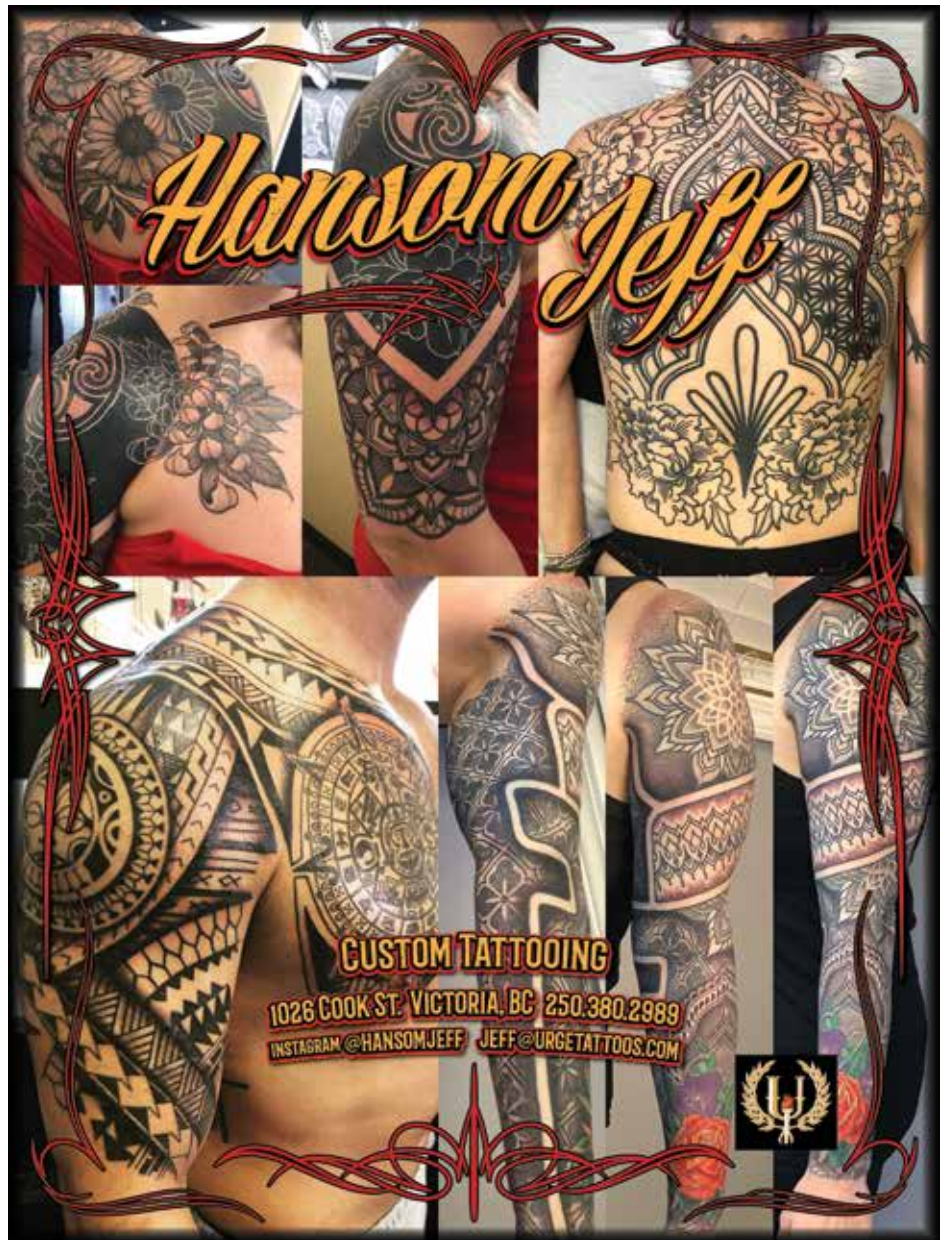
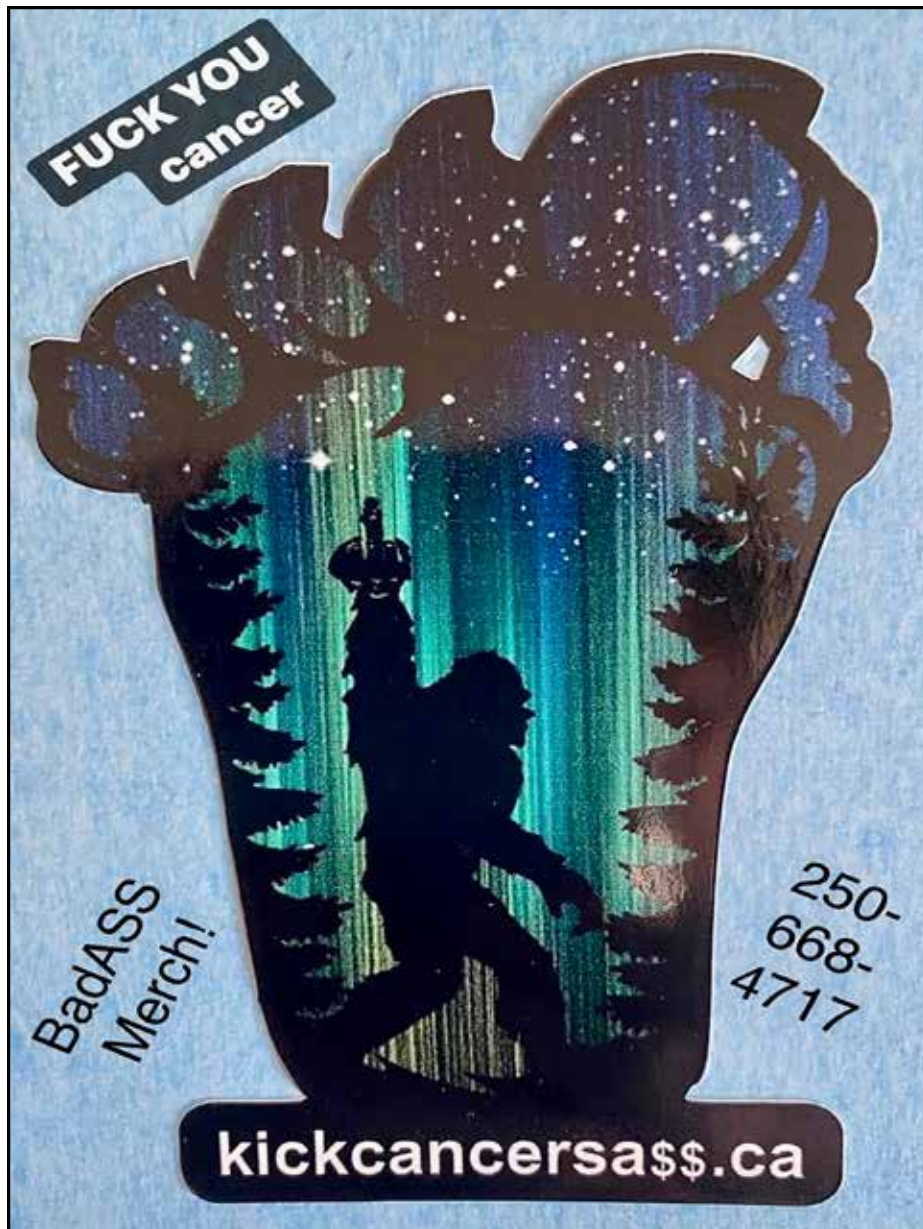
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Bliss-Illusion Chinese Blackgaze Illusionist

Interview with vocalist Dryad

By Ryan Dyer

A mythological phoenix with black feathers flies the dark, smoggy musical skies of China. This phoenix represents Bliss-Illusion, a group of six musicians who are brandishing their own form of Buddhist inspired, folk metal. Their debut album *Shinrabansho* rides on the winds of folk-infused blackgaze while their live shows amplify the atmosphere on the album with a ceremonial experience which includes incense, costumes and Buddhist scriptures. Raise the red lantern along with your devil horns and ride the phoenix into new musical terrains as we learn about Bliss-Illusion with vocalist Dryad.

Absolute Underground: Hello Dryad. Could you tell me a little about your personal history

with black metal and how it inspired you as an artist?

D: Hey! I'm glad to accept your interview! Thank you! I was only 15 when I first heard black metal, and the first band I heard out of this musical style was Summoning. My future musical voice was quite inspired by them but another main influence comes from a band that is a little left of the black metal genre, that being Sigur Ros. I decided that I must create beautiful music, similar to them in the future. The world is very sad and needs healing, and I wanted to help it with music. Getting back on topic, though, I will always be grateful for black metal, what it has brought me and how it has inspired me.

AU: When did Bliss Illusion start?

D: In the spring of 2015, Bliss Illusion began with myself, guitarist Wang Xiao, flutist Li Que and former drummer Tong Xiaotao. Wang Xiao and I are huge post rock fans, and our combined passion for this genre led to the creation and recordings related to Bliss-Illusion.

AU: What artists or bands have inspired Bliss-Illusion's multifaceted sound?

D: My album is influenced by quite a lot of different artists across all mediums, such as Dante



Alighieri, Jorge Luis Borges, Hermann Hesse, Gabriel García Márquez, Jónsi (Sigur Rós), Alex Somers, Bethlehem, Lifelover, Nocturnal Depression, Misertus, Archivist, Violet Cold, Falaïse, Gorgoroth, Emperor, Satyricon, Darkthrone, Hypomania, Envy, Young Galaxy, The South, The Cure and so on!

AU: Recently, you have received some attention like with Mayhem's Teloch recommending your album. What do you think about this international exposure?

D: I really appreciate every friend who supports and loves us! Thank you! As for the first album of the band, we still need to work hard and improve, but fortunately, we still have time to make up for the troubles of future creation. In short, I am very grateful to every friend who loves this album!

AU: What is the story with the cover of the single "Mukti"?

D: "Mukti" means Nirvana in Sanskrit, and is the second chapter of the trilogy of the three realms of Buddhism: the celestial people, the human and the road to hell. The artwork is a picture of a Buddhist statue carved in a cliff in North Korea. Dating from the Koryo period, it is 15-metres high and 9.4-metres wide. The statue was once part of a larger temple dedicated to Manjushri (the Bodhisattva of wisdom) that was laid to waste in the late-Choson period, leaving only the carving. The album cover is a photograph of this statue that was discovered at an exhibition in the 798 Art District of Beijing. The song represents the start of a new path to enlightenment, and this Buddha is like a door to the spiritual world. The fact that it comes from North Korea is intriguing because we know very little about their art.

AU: Besides music, you've said you're into

ABSOLUTE ASIA

collecting game consoles. What is your favorite game and do these games or game soundtracks inspire your music?

D: I started playing video games when I was four years old. I like RPG games very much. I like collecting all kinds of game consoles and game cards: NGC, Atari, N64, PS1, PS2, NDS, MD, SFC, GBA, SS and DC. My favorite games are Dragon Quest, Kabuki KLASH, Chrono Trigger, the Final Fantasy series, Elder Scrolls and The Witch.

AU: Additionally, what films/books have inspired you?

D: The books that first influenced me were *Divina Commedia*, *Cien años de Soledad*, *El Amor en Los Tiempos del Cólera*, *El Jardín de Senderos que se bifurcan*, *Der Steppenwolf* and *Siddhartha - Eine Indische Dichtung*. I recommend movies such as *Mr. Nobody*, *Seven Pounds*, *Brazil*, *Le tout Nouveau test*, *DET Sjunde Egglet*, *The Green Mile*, *Dracula*, *City Lights*, *Angel A*, *Poulet aux Prunes*. I prefer magical and cut style movies more than common mainstream ones.

AU: Does Bliss-Illusion have any plans for touring abroad later on?

D: I go to Japan with my wife every year. We like it very much,

but now the world is in a very nervous state. I hope the world will get better soon! I also hope you can be safe and healthy. I'm glad to end your interview and look forward to seeing you soon! Thank you!

<https://www.facebook.com/Bliss.Illusion.cn>

<https://bliss-illusion.bandcamp.com/>





Bryan Glen McCallum, October 17, 1976 to June 28, 2022

By Heath Fenton

I first became aware of Bry Guy (as many called him) in the late 1990s, when I bore witness to his then band Karen Foster play at the Columbia Hotel in Vancouver BC. Immediately I was dumbfounded by the fact that three musicians of such great talent and uniqueness could find each other and end up in the same band. They destroyed the place. Bryan in particular stood out to me. He was a four-stringed demon. He had such an individual style. He was almost like a guitar player using a bass, but nothing like a guitar player.

I would soon become friends with the Karen Foster guys through mutual friends in the

Vancouver music scene, and would go see them often. Me and Bryan hit it off the most. He would instantly draw you in with his grand smile and sweet mannerisms. He was always so stoked and happy about everything. Whenever there was a time for me to form a band, and it came to finding a bass player, Bryan was always first on the list to try and snag. Easier said than done, because he always had a gig with someone else. I did manage to play with him on three occasions. The first was in Openfire. We suddenly lost our bass player shortly before a handful of high profile gigs. He was the first person I asked, and he agreed. That was another thing Bryan was good at, filling in on bass. He had the uncanny ability to hear something once and immediately pick it up, make it his own, and then make it better. This was my first taste of playing with Bryan, and he became one of my favourite musicians on the planet.

I ended up starting a new band with Bryan. It took some convincing, but the deal was sealed when he had a rare window of being bandless and I had some solid musicians. We

called it Last Plague. He was around for about a year before he got called off to do better, more productive stuff. One thing about having Bryan in your band is that it gave you a sort of street cred and respect from other musicians, because if Bryan was in your band, then you must be good. Those two stints solidified our friendship and my love for him as a person and a musician. After that we were always friends and would see each other often at shows, play shows together and just hang out. Then he disappeared from Vancouver around 2014 or so, and I lost track of him. I moved to Vancouver Island three years ago and discovered that he was living in Victoria. Even though I was in Nanaimo I was determined to track him down and start a band and make it work, so I met him in Victoria and it was like we had just hung out last week. Hugs, laughs, stories and all that. And he was stoked on my band idea, so we did it. And it was glorious to play music again with my talented friend. Some good things don't last. And unfortunately this was one of them. My heart is broken, and I don't even feel like playing music anymore. But I am thankful that I did get to reconnect with my friend and hang out again for

the last year. I am thankful I got to see Bryan's last days of his life with him happy, in a good place, going to shows, enjoying life, and playing music again. Music was everything to Bryan, I swear that is all he did. He absolutely loved it. And music loved him.

Bryan got around. He always was in demand. And with good reason. He was like the Kevin Bacon of local musicians. Find a band member of any genre in Vancouver or on Vancouver Island and you can easily get six degrees separation of Bryan. He was influenced by both punk and metal and all things in between. He loved his classic bass players like Les Claypool, Cliff Burton, and Rob Wright. He could sit in with anybody.

His body of work includes the bands SNFU, Death Sentence, Karen Foster, Assertion, Carole Pope, Stinkhorn, Wasted Strays, Powerclown, Last Plague, Bishops Green, Motorama, Anatolian Wizdom, and that is just from my knowledge. I am sure I am missing some. So let's talk to some of those people and see what they had to say.

Chad MacQuarrie (Karen Foster/Assertion/The Carole Pope Band)

I met Bryan in Nanaimo sometime in the late 1990s. I was playing at the Queens showroom on a weeknight. Not many people in the audience, but Bryan was there. He approached me during a set break and we talked. Bryan was very friendly and sincere. At this time I was looking for a bassist for Karen Foster. I got Bryan's mailing address and sent him a KF demo and he caught a ferry over a few weeks later to 'audition'. He was a great bass player even back then. Really great right arm/hand... he was like a bassist and rhythm guitarist all in one! Later on, when KF was between drummers, Bryan joined Assertion. We went on the road several times, often cross country during these 8 or 9 years I played with Bryan.

Bryan was too sweet for this world and this manifested at times in an outrageously polarised way. But nevertheless motivated by something better than mere sentimentality. To me Bryan was very spiritual, but not the evangelicalist know it all, higher moral ground type of 'spiritual'. He was someone who knew what real love was in spite of so many problems.

Ben Lightning (Wasted Strays/Powerclown)

During the time that Bryan and I played together we hung out a ton. He was always down to play music and that was a time of real growth for me thanks in great part to him. He wasn't into sports or cars or watching TV. He played music.

You'd go over to his place and he was playing along to anything you could imagine, from the most challenging bass-centric music to the meat and potato standards. Which meant that he knew all the songs I did, could show me some more, and also picked things up effortlessly. He added new dimensions other bass players couldn't or wouldn't consider. He was a top gun musical collaborator and partner. He didn't just know the songs, he breathed life into them. Bryan was music.

Ken Flemming (SNFU/Death Sentence)

Well, being in SNFU with Brian was nothing short of brilliant. Brian pretty much taught me the whole set with all the bells and whistles. Every single note. We also had a great musical and friendship solid. He was such a quirky weird genius but yet simple and humble and that's what I loved about him. Death sentence was no different. He pretty much showed us all the parts to the songs even Syd forgot parts but Brian knew every note.



Jason Dana (Karen Foster/The Carole Pope Band)

I grew up with Bryan in Nanaimo. From the get go, he was already a very accomplished bass player. His skill level was leaps and bounds ahead of all of us. All the local musicians marvelled at his ability to play the bass with the conviction of his bass idols. We both eventually moved to Van to pursue music. Chad and Bryan gave me a shot at getting involved with Karen Foster and it worked. I was stoked to be in a band with such musical integrity.

We gigged as much as we could and turned some heads. He was one of the wittiest persons I have met. Was full of charisma and talent. He will never be forgotten as a treasure on the bass.

Marcus Lander (Motorama)

Motorama did some local Vancouver shows and then took a trip down the coast to Mexico. We used to do a weekly Motorama rehearsals plus Bryan and I would do a session with a drum machine in his apartment once a week. We had some good times, lots of beer and lots of laughs. He used to keep a six pack in an ammo box to bring into the bar for shows so he didn't have to buy beer in the bar. He was a great bass player and inspired me to push myself to be a better guitar player. I'll always remember a couple of phrases that he repeated: "heads up hockey" - when someone makes a mistake in a song and we all notice and get back on track and "it's good to be here, it's good to be gay" - self explanatory. He had a good heart and really cared about his friends and especially music.

Orville Lancaster (Bishops Green)

I met Bryan well over a decade ago. We started hanging around jamming, playing music, right around the time Bishops Green was forming, we became good friends.

Bryan was an original member of Bishops Green, we played a lot of shows together, and he laid down the bass tracks on our first self-titled EP in 2013. I have fond memories of hanging around with Bryan, goofing around, being silly, going on dog walks, Bryan loved animals. I always enjoyed listening to him talk about his memorabilia

collection, talk music, and of course, he loved to talk about all things bass. For anyone that played music with Bryan, they will know that it is an understatement to say he was a monster on the bass. He was intuitive, creative, a gentle soul, and so very very talented. A next level artist.

Murray Acton (Stinkhorn)

I jammed with him a few times in Vancouver before he moved back to the island and every time it was epic. I love jamming. You don't play songs when you're jamming and Bryan had his head around that. He loved it because he got to play what he wanted to play and he did so with all the passion he could muster up. When I found out he had moved to Victoria I hunted him down and talked him into playing bass for Stinkhorn, a band that Brains and I were just getting started. Bryan had the missing ingredient. He was like John Wetton of King Crimson. We jammed as much as we actually practised structured songs. Those were some great nights. Bryan was at his best when there were no restrictions or even suggestions as to how and what he should play. It turns out that, if you had some specific riffs in mind that you wanted played on the bass, working with Bryan would be a very frustrating and



likely unproductive experience. I'm not sure if Bryan was even capable of playing a song with structured bass lines. The harder you tried to get him to do it, the harder he resisted and eventually he would tip his amp over or something equally alarming. Of course I had to figure that out by trial and error and there's no denying we had our moments. |My memories are kind to Bryan, they include his ear to ear grin, a shameless hug, and a promise to jam.

(Powerclown)

Bryan was like a brother. Our history goes back at least 25 years. Like most fraternal relationships, I can only assume since I don't have any blood related brothers, there were ups and downs. He was an incredibly talented bass player. Playing music with him could be amazing. Other times were very frustrating. His passion and child like enthusiasm was fucking awesome. When he didn't feel like cooperating though, two words, that fucking pedal board! Those of you who know, really know. When I think back on our man Mr. McCallum, we had a lot of great times, played a lot of great music and that's what I'll remember.



On to that big pedalboard in the great beyond my dear friend. All the love Bryan. Rest easy bro.



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Gord Lewis - Guitar
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